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ABSTRACT

The Nevada Writing Assessment Program has been developed, implemented, and facilitated by Nevada classroom teachers, who have adapted, designed, and continually revised the scoring criteria; designed the assessment writing prompts; evaluated and chosen anchor papers; led the scoring sessions and read and scored the student papers; and made the classroom connections from assessment to instruction in order to improve student writing. Types of writing measured and their real world uses are: Narrative writing tells a story by sharing details of an experience; Expository writing instructs, gives information, or explains something about a topic; Persuasive writing gives a writer's opinion of a topic and tries to get the reader to agree; and Descriptive writing describes a person, place, thing, or idea. The Nevada Writing Assessment Program uses two types of direct writing assessment: holistic and analytic trait scoring. This guide is divided into the following sections: Introduction; Background and Purposes of Assessment; Scoring Rubrics; Eleventh Grade Sample Papers; Twelfth Grade Sample Papers; Eighth Grade Sample Papers; Fourth Grade Sample Papers; Writing for Assessment Tips; Trait Bookmarks for Classroom Use; Resources for Writing Teachers; and References for Writing Assessments. (NKA)

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Nevada Department of Education

Writing Proficiency Examination Instructional Guide

2000-2001

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Introduction

This is the third edition of this manual and many thanks are in order for first and second edition editors, Kathy St. Clair and Jeanne Ohl. In addition to eleventh, twelfth and eighth grade writing samples, this edition includes fourth grade annotated samples. This will assist teachers with assessment and instruction, it will provide students with a glimpse at the variety of responses to topics as well as the reasons for scores, and parents will gain some background on expectations for student achievement.

Special thanks to annotation authors: Jacquie Moore, Barbara Smith, Joanne Walen, Esther Cooper, Juliana Gabica, Marian Clish and to all the Nevada teachers who have assisted in developing and revising rubrics, writing prompts and scoring papers. Their work and expertise are greatly appreciated.

Special acknowledgment to Cindy Sharp for proofreading, Carol Mason for graphics and Bobbie Paul for paste-up work of student samples.

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Instructional Guide for the Nevada Proficiency Examinations in Writing

Background and Purposes of Assessment

The strength of the Nevada Writing Assessment Program is that it has been developed, implemented and facilitated by Nevada classroom teachers. They have adapted, designed and continually revised the scoring criteria, they design the assessment writing prompts, they evaluate and choose anchor papers, they lead the scoring sessions and read and score all the student papers, and they make the classroom connections from assessment to instruction to improve student writing.

Scorers have noted that participating in scoring sessions allows them a broader viewpoint of student writing beyond their own classrooms, schools and even districts. It also provides teachers with the opportunity to focus solely on the merits of an individual piece of writing, without the extraneous information of individual student progress and the unique situations of individual classroom settings.

Large-scale assessments in education are designed to note trends and patterns in the student performance of large groups. While large-scale, standardized writing assessment is not new, it has undergone tremendous changes in the last 25 years. It has progressed from multiple choice formatted questions that measured how well students are able to find errors in others' writing, to performance-based testing of individual student writing, to portfolio assessment with collections of student writing that are both self-assessed and teacher evaluated. In Nevada, these assessments are based, in part, on the need to provide accountability data so that assistance may be given to those schools and students who are in greatest need of additional resources. However, for most writing teachers the importance of this type of assessment is its potential for directing students in thinking and talking about their writing. The assessment criteria gives them the language to define and discuss the essence of good writing, their own as well as others, so that they are able to self-assess, evaluate and improve.

Writing, like reading, is a meaning making activity that requires a variety of related thinking skills, processes, and strategies depending on the mode and purpose of the writing. Additionally, writing processes are employed in different ways by writers and even by the same writer for varying purposes. Types of writing measured and their real world uses are:

- Narrative writing tells a story by sharing the details of an experience.
  Examples include: writing stories, accident/incident reports, sporting event reports, meeting minutes, job performance review.
- Expository writing instructs, gives information or explains something about a topic.
  Examples include: writing messages, invitations, directions, explanations, reports, evaluations.
- Persuasive writing gives a writer's opinion on a topic and tries to get the reader to agree with it.
  Examples include: campaign literature, business correspondence, petitions, editorials, proposals, solutions, marketing/sales materials.
- Descriptive writing describes a person, place, thing or idea. It is often used in conjunction with the other modes to provide details that strengthen the purpose of the writing.

In Nevada, the 4th and the 8th grade writing prompts are each selected to assess narrative/descriptive writing. The 11th/12th grade writing assessment uses two prompts, one is narrative/descriptive and the other is expository/persuasive.

Types of Writing Assessment Used in Nevada

The Nevada Writing Assessment Program uses two types of direct writing assessment: holistic and analytical trait scoring.

Holistic

This type of scoring is used for high school writing proficiency examinations as a requirement for receiving a diploma from a Nevada high school. The score reflects an overall impression of the writing with a balance of the strengths and weaknesses. It focuses on the entire piece of writing, maintaining that the whole can be greater or worse than its individual parts. That is, adding up the sum of a piece of writing's individual features does not necessarily reflect an accurate evaluation of the writing.

Nevada teachers, who are trained in scoring procedures and techniques, assign a score from one to six, with six being the highest possible score. The value reflects an overall impression of the writing based on established criteria in the holistic scoring rubric and on sample range-finder papers. (See page 7 for holistic rubric.) One of the benefits of the holistic scoring in Nevada has been helping students to develop their own evaluation abilities to assist in writing and revision practices.

Analytical

Analytic trait scoring considers the interrelated components of good writing and describes their features with a score from one to five, with five being the highest. The Nevada State Standards define the teaching of six writing traits: ideas, organization, voice, conventions, word choice and sentence fluency. However, only four: ideas, organization, voice and conventions are tested at the state level. (See pages 8-15 for analytic rubrics and accompanying developmental continuums.) Analytic trait scoring is more useful in diagnosing writing skills and giving specific instructional feedback, and is therefore more comprehensive and more closely tied to instruction than holistic scoring.

Writing Prompt Selection Importance and Process

Writing prompts for large-scale writing tests are different from classroom topics in that students must be able to understand and respond to the prompt quickly and have something to say without further research or assistance. Therefore the prompt must be stated clearly and have a broad base of interest and understanding to meet the varied backgrounds and experiences of students. And while a prompt should engage students and allow for some individual development, it must not force students to become so involved with the task that they lose control of their writing. It is also important that the prompt not be so difficult nor so bland that it prevents writers from finding a topic that evokes the kind of personal engagement that elicits the best writing.

Writing prompts used in Nevada testing have been submitted by teachers and are reviewed by a bias review panel consisting of educators, community representatives and members of special populations designed to address the perspectives and needs of all of Nevada's students. They are further reviewed and revised by the teachers who are head readers for the

state. To see previous prompts used in our writing assessment program, please visit our website at http://www.nsn.k12.nv.us/nvdoe/

Testing Session Procedures

In high school writing examinations, students are asked to write to two prompts, one narrative/descriptive and one persuasive/expository. They have two hours in which to draft and edit both pieces. High school students are not allowed the use of a dictionary or thesaurus.

Students in eighth grade write over a two-day period, in approximately two 35 minute sessions. They are given a narrative/descriptive prompt and they are permitted the use of dictionaries.

Fourth grade students write over an extended three-day period with one 50 minute and two 35 minute sessions. Their prompt is also narrative/descriptive and they receive teacher assistance that is directed to the whole class with the prewriting portion of the test during the first session. They are encouraged to use the dictionary to edit their final drafts.

Each of the assigned 4th and 8th grade writing pieces must be limited to one page of a lined, 8" x 11" Scantron© sheet. Special accommodations are provided for students in certain learning categories. Please see a copy of the High School Administration Manual or the Fourth & Eighth Grade Writing Administration Manual for those provisions.

Scoring Session Procedures

Several days prior to a scoring session, approximately ten experienced teacher-readers meet for a sample pull to select "anchor papers" or range finder samples from that test's administration. They use the rubrics and their considerable experience to select, from hundreds of papers, those that best meet the established standards and criteria.

Next, table leaders, an additional group of approximately ten teachers, meet and decide if the sample pull papers are adequate indicators of the target scores. They give evidence, based on the scoring rubric, of specific examples or descriptors for each of the sample papers. The morning of the scoring session, all readers work with the sample papers and the scoring rubrics to train for the scoring process. Because of this process, scorers who are thoroughly trained to work with the rubric criteria, score papers with great inter-reader reliability.

Each paper is read twice and if the two scorers are more than one point discrepant, the paper is reread by a third reader with extensive scoring experience who decides on the final score. Any single score may contain, to a varying degree, the characteristics of that particular score point. For instance, all papers with the score of 4 will include papers that are high 4s, low 4s, and middle 4s. So, while one scorer may consider a paper a low 4, another might rank it a high 3 and they might both be correct, thus allowing for a one point disparity.

Writing Scores Appeals Process

Any request to check and review an individual student's writing scores, on any test (4th, 8th or 11/12th grades) must come to Nevada Department of Education through the appropriate district test director who will field questions and provide necessary information about scores. If a test director contacts the Department about a writing score that s/he truly feels may be erroneous, the writing evaluation consultant will pull the actual student test and read and evaluate the given scores. If s/he determines that the scores are accurate representations of

the student's work, she/he will prepare annotations supporting the scores and send the annotations and a highlighted photocopy of the student's paper to the district test director.
If the paper has been given scores with which the evaluation consultant disagrees, s/he will first prepare annotations to support changing the scores. The paper will be re-copied with the scores hidden. It will then be sent by FAX or mail to two head readers at opposite ends of the state. They will be asked to score it "blind" and provide an annotation justifying the scores they give.
When the writing evaluation consultant receives the annotations and scores from the two head readers, s/he will check them for agreement or discrepancy. If the two head readers' scores are identical or adjacent, and together indicate that the original scores were erroneous, the evaluation consultant will change the state records, notify the district test director of the change, and send copies of the changed report and annotations to the district.
If the scores from the two head readers are discrepant, (one indicates a change in the student's score, but the other doesn't), the score will stand as recorded. The evaluation consultant will then notify the district that the paper has been read a total of five times, and that three of the five readers have assigned identical or adjacent scores, and the score will stand. Supporting annotations will be sent to the district.

Readers for Writing Proficiency Examination Scoring Sessions

Nevada writing examinations are scored by Nevada teachers. A team of head readers, who are also Nevada teachers, train teachers to score the tests both at intensive inservice workshops and again prior to every scoring session. They also monitor reader accuracy during scoring sessions. If a reader is found to be consistently inaccurate in his/her scoring, he/she is invited to re-train at another inservice training session prior to scoring again for the Proficiency Examination Program.

Writing Proficiency Examination Scores as Performance Indicators

Large-scale writing assessments are not complete indicators of how well an individual student is progressing in writing. It is but one indicator, one sample of student work, performed under testing conditions, that gives limited information on an individual student's level. A large sampling, or student portfolio would provide a more accurate picture of student achievement. Skill in planning and managing a writing portfolio, including selecting work to add to the portfolio, analyzing and reflecting on personal growth as a writer, and setting goals for improvement is beyond the scope of this manual. However, there are many fine resources available on the subject of portfolios and the variety of ways they can be collected and organized, i.e., by self-designated "best examples of writing", by in-progress drafts and final copy, or by a variety of modes of writing. Please see additional resources at the back of this manual.

Scoring Rubrics

A rubric, or scoring guide based on a set of described criteria or standards, is used to assess the writing of Nevada students. The following rubrics for holistic and analytic trait scoring were developed and have been revised by Nevada teachers.

SCORE "SIX"	SCORE "FIVE"	SCORE "FOUR"
A six paper is superior. It does ALL OR MOST of the following: • Focuses and develops ideas in a sustained and compelling manner, showing creativity and insight. • Defends or persuades with precise and relevant evidence, clearly defines and frames issues. • Effectively organizes ideas in a clear, logical and coherent manner, using appropriate structure to enhance the central idea or theme. • Demonstrates involvement with the text and speaks purposefully to the audience in an appropriate, individualistic, and engaging manner. • Uses sophisticated sentence structure and word choice, with a sense of control for stylistic effect. • Commits few, if any, errors in standard English grammar/usage and mechanics.	A five paper is distinctly above average. It does ALL OR MOST of the following: • Effectively focuses and develops ideas in an effective and detailed manner. • Defends or persuades with important and relevant evidence, defines and frames issues. • Organizes ideas clearly and coherently, using structure appropriate to purpose. • Communicates a sense of commitment to the topic and involves the audience. • Uses varied sentence structure and effective word choice. • Commits few errors in standard English grammar/usage and mechanics.	A four paper is adequate. It exhibits ALL OR MOST of the following characteristics: • Adequately focuses and develops ideas with some detail. • Defends or persuades with support and clarity, using relevant evidence. • Organizes ideas in a satisfactory manner with adequate coherence and logic. • Uses a voice that is appropriate to audience and purpose. • May use a variety of sentence structure and word choice, but occasionally display some wordiness or ineffective diction; sentences may be predictable. • Commits some errors in standard English grammar/usage and mechanics that do not impede meaning; indicates basic understanding of conventions.
SCORE "THREE"	**SCORE "TWO"**	**SCORE "ONE"**
A three paper is inadequate. It is clearly flawed in SOME OR ALL of the following ways: • Focuses, but may not display mature or well-developed ideas. • Attempts to defend or persuade, but position is unclear or evidence is limited. • Displays minimal organization; may contain irrelevancies, digress, ramble, or lack logic. • Lacks sincerity in the writer's attempt to involve the audience. • Uses sentence structure or word choice that is somewhat limited, simplistic, mundane, or inaccurate. • Contains flaws in standard English grammar/usage and mechanics that do not impede meaning, indicates some consistent misunderstanding of the conventions.	A two paper is very weak. It reveals serious and persistent problems in communications. It compounds the weaknesses of the 3 paper in SOME OR ALL of the following ways: • Lacks focus and development, may list items with little or no supporting detail. • Defense or persuasive stance is unclear or absent, evidence is vague or missing. • Contains serious flaws in structure, organization and coherence. • Fails in the writer's attempt to involve the audience. • Uses sentence structure or word choice that is highly limited, simplistic, or inaccurate. • Displays consistent violations in standard English grammar/usage and mechanics that impede understanding.	A one paper is extremely weak. It has few redeeming qualities. It at least mentions the topic, but generally fails to communicate with the reader. It does SOME OR ALL of the following: • Simply repeats the topic or fails to provide adequate development. • Fails to establish a position and/or develop persuasive view; evidence is missing. • Shows almost no structure, organization or coherence. • Does not address the audience appropriately. • Uses limited or immature sentence structure and word choice. • Overwhelms the reader with serious violations of standard English grammar/usage and mechanics.

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ANALYTIC SCORING GUIDE*

IDEAS AND CONTENT (DEVELOPMENT)

5: This paper is clear, focused, and interesting. It holds the reader's attention. Relevant anecdotes and details enrich the central theme or story line. Ideas are fresh and original.

- The writer seems to be writing from experience and shows insight: a good sense of how events unfold, how people respond to life and to each other.
- The writing has balance; main ideas stand out.
- Supporting, relevant, telling details give the reader important information that he or she could not personally bring to the text.
- The writer works with and shapes ideas, making connections and sharing insights.
- The writer seems in control and develops the topic in an enlightening, entertaining way.

3: The paper is clear and focused. The topic shows promise even though development is still limited, sketchy, or general.

- The writer does seem to be writing from experience but has some trouble going from general observations to specifics.
- Ideas are reasonably clear and purposeful even though they may not be explicit, detailed, personalized, or expanded to show in-depth understanding.
- The writer is beginning to define the topic but is not there yet. It is pretty easy to see where the writer is headed although more information is needed to "fill in the blanks."
- Support is attempted but doesn't go far enough yet in expanding, clarifying, or adding new insights.
- Themes or main points seem a blend of the original and the predictable.

1: As yet, the paper has no clear sense of purpose or central theme. To extract meaning from the text, the reader must make inferences based on sketchy details. More than one of the following problems is likely to be evident:

- The writer has not yet begun to define the topic in a meaningful or personal way.
- Information is very limited or unclear.
- The text is very repetitious or reads like a collection of random thoughts from which no central theme emerges.
- Everything seems as important as everything else; the reader has a hard time sifting out what's critical.
- The writer may still be in search of a real topic or sense of direction to guide development.

*The Nevada Department of Education gratefully acknowledges Vicki Spandel and the teachers of Beaverton, Oregon School District who developed the original trait scoring in 1984.

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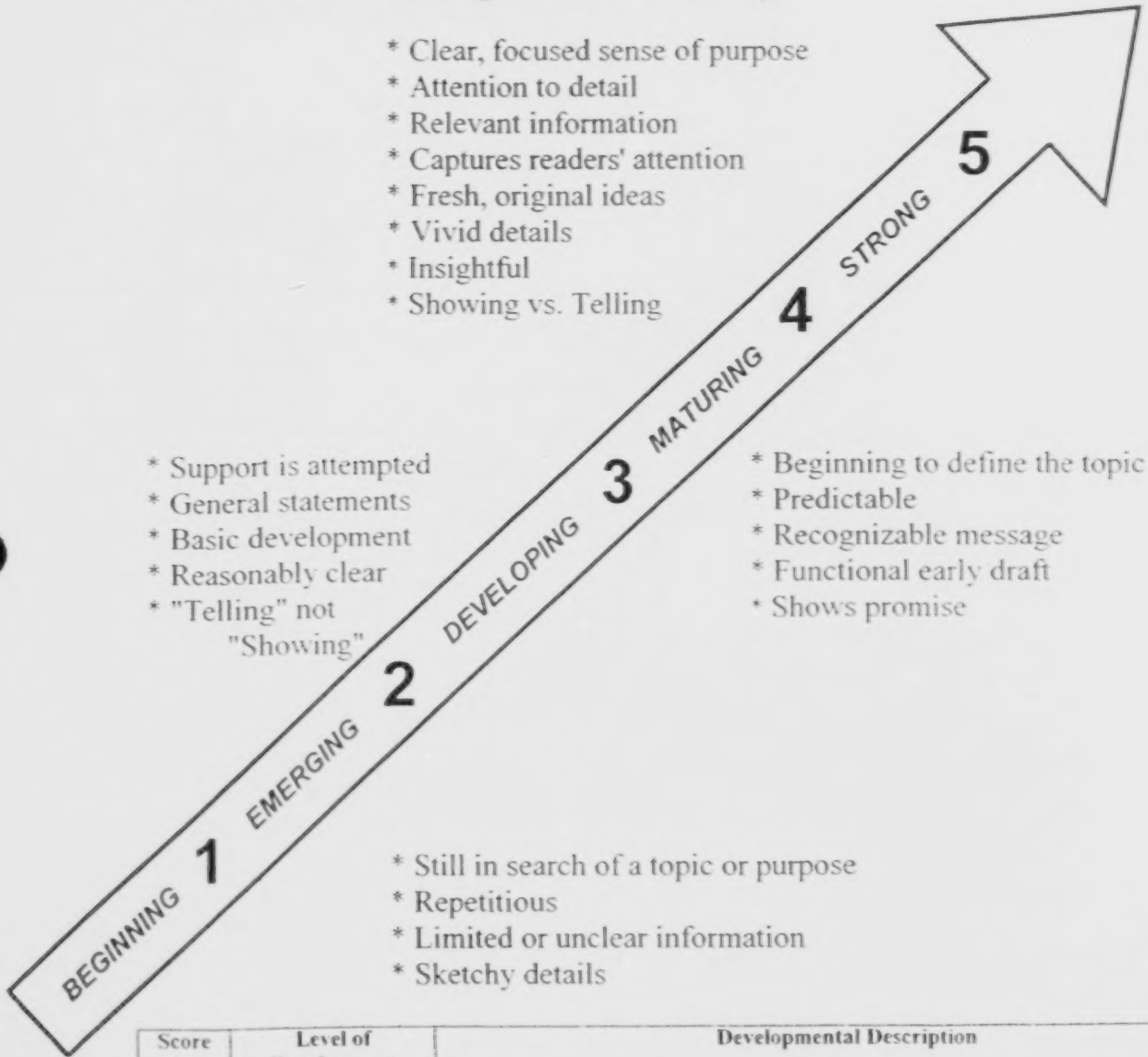
Ideas

The message or story



Score	Level of Development	Developmental Description
1	BEGINNING	Searching, exploring, struggling - looking for a sense of purpose or way to begin
2	EMERGING	Moments that may engage the reader - stories/ideas buried within the text
3	DEVELOPING	Writer begins to take control, begins to shape ideas - writing gaining definite direction, coherence, momentum, sense of purpose
4	MATURING	More control, writer has confidence to experiment - about a draft away from a finished product
5	STRONG	Writer in control, skillfully shaping and directing the writing - evidence of fine tuning

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ANALYTIC SCORING GUIDE*

Organization

5: The organization enhances and showcases the central idea or thesis. The order, structure, or presentation is compelling and moves the reader through the text.

- An inviting introduction draws the reader in and a satisfying conclusion leaves the reader with a sense of resolution.
- Details seem to fit where they're placed; sequencing is logical and effective.
- Transitions are smooth and weave the separate threads of meaning into one cohesive whole.
- Progression of ideas is very well controlled; the writer delivers needed information at just the right moment, then moves on.
- Organization flows so smoothly the reader hardly thinks about it.

3: The organizational structure is strong enough to move the reader from point to point without undue confusion.

- The paper has a recognizable introduction and conclusion. The introduction may not create a strong sense of anticipation; the conclusion may not leave the reader with a satisfying sense of resolution.
- Sequencing is usually logical. It may sometimes be too obvious or otherwise ineffective.
- Transitions often work well; at times though, connections between ideas are fuzzy or call for inferences.
- Progression of ideas is fairly well controlled although the writer sometimes spurts ahead too quickly or spends too much time on the obvious.
- Despite a few problems, the organization does not seriously get in the way of the main point or story line.

- **1: The writing lacks a clear sense of direction. Ideas, details, or events seem strung together in a random, haphazard fashion – or else there is no identifiable internal structure at all. More than one of the following problems is likely to be evident:**

- The writer has not yet drafted a real lead or conclusion.
- Sequencing and details, if they are present, need work.
- Transitions are not yet clearly defined; connections between ideas seem confusing or incomplete.
- Pacing feels awkward, with lots of time spent on minor details or with big, hard-to-follow leaps from point to point.
- Lack of organization makes it hard for the reader to get a grip on the main point or story line.

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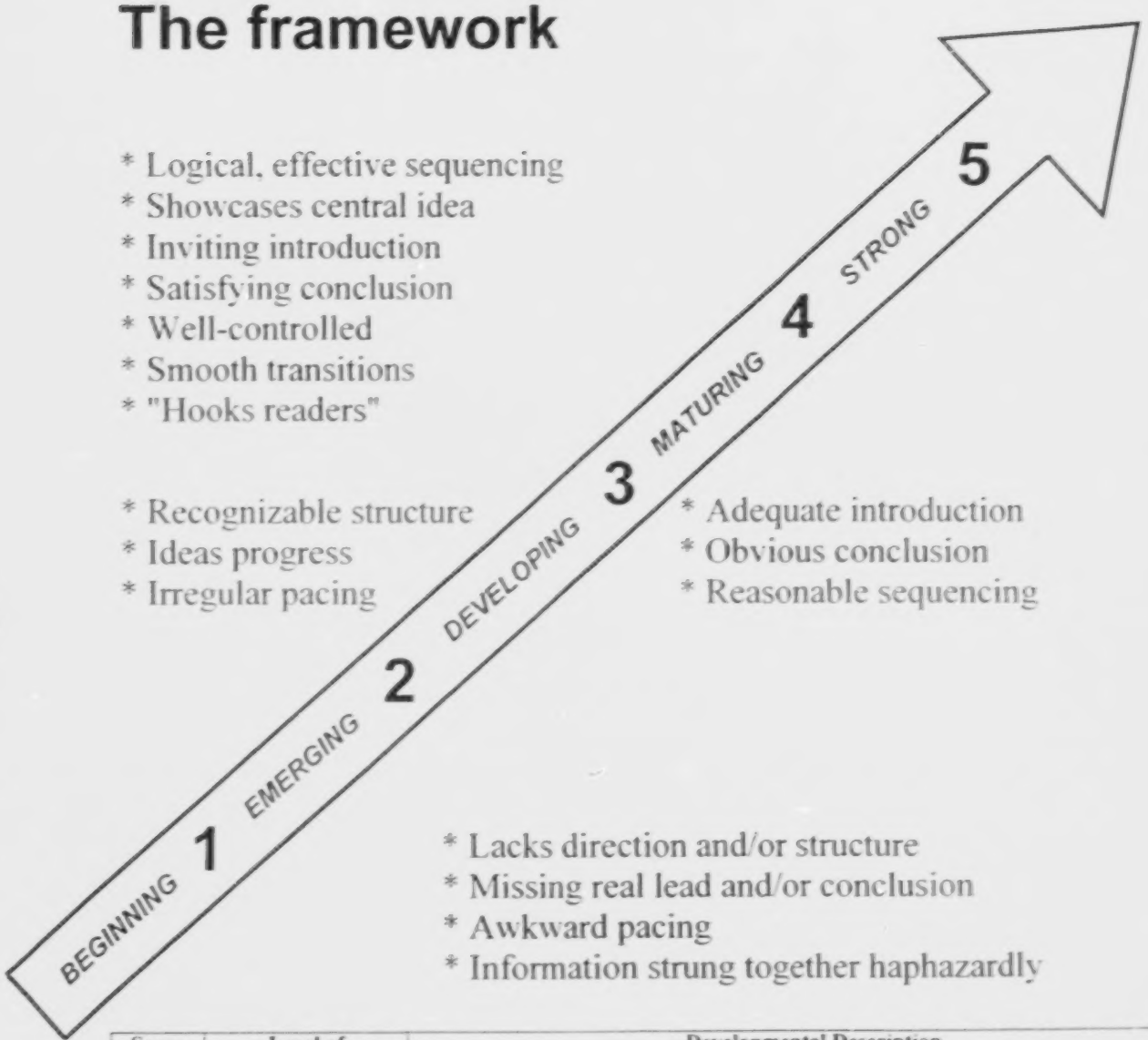
Organization
The framework

* Logical, effective sequencing
* Showcases central idea
* Inviting introduction
* Satisfying conclusion
* Well-controlled
* Smooth transitions
* "Hooks readers"



* Recognizable structure
* Ideas progress
* Irregular pacing

* Adequate introduction
* Obvious conclusion
* Reasonable sequencing

* Lacks direction and/or structure
* Missing real lead and/or conclusion
* Awkward pacing
* Information strung together haphazardly

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ANALYTIC SCORING GUIDE*

VOICE

5: The writer speaks directly to the reader in a way that is individualistic, expressive, and engaging. Clearly, the writer is involved in the text, and the writing is writing to be read.

- The paper is honest and written from the heart. It has the ring of conviction.
- The language is natural yet provocative; it brings the topic to life and indicates writers attitude towards subjects through various strategies.
- The audience feels a strong sense of interaction with the writer and senses the person behind the words.
- The projected tone and voice give flavor to the writer's message and seem very appropriate for the intended purpose and audience.
- Strong presence of the writer on the page.

3: The writer seems sincere, but not genuinely engaged, committed, or involved. The result is pleasant and sometimes even personable, but short of compelling.

- The writing communicates in an earnest, pleasing manner. Moments here and there amuse, surprise, delight, or move the reader.
- Voice may emerge strongly on occasion, then retreat behind general, vague, tentative, or abstract language.
- The writing hides as much of the writer as it reveals.
- The writer seems aware of an audience, but often weighs words too carefully and stands at a distance to avoid risk.
- Developing a presence of writer on the page.

1: The writer seems indifferent, uninvolved, or distanced from the topic and/or the audience. As a result, the writing is flat, lifeless, or mechanical; depending on the topic, it may be overly technical or jargonistic. More than one of the following problems is likely to be evident:

- The writing communicates on a functional level with no apparent attempt to move or involve the audience.
- The language is a kind of monotone; it tends to flatten all potential highs and lows of the message.
- The writer is not yet sufficiently engaged or at home with the topic to take risks or to share himself/herself. The audience has a hard time sensing the writer behind the words.
- The writer does not seem to reach out to an audience or make use of voice to connect with that audience.
- Little or no presence of the writer on the page.

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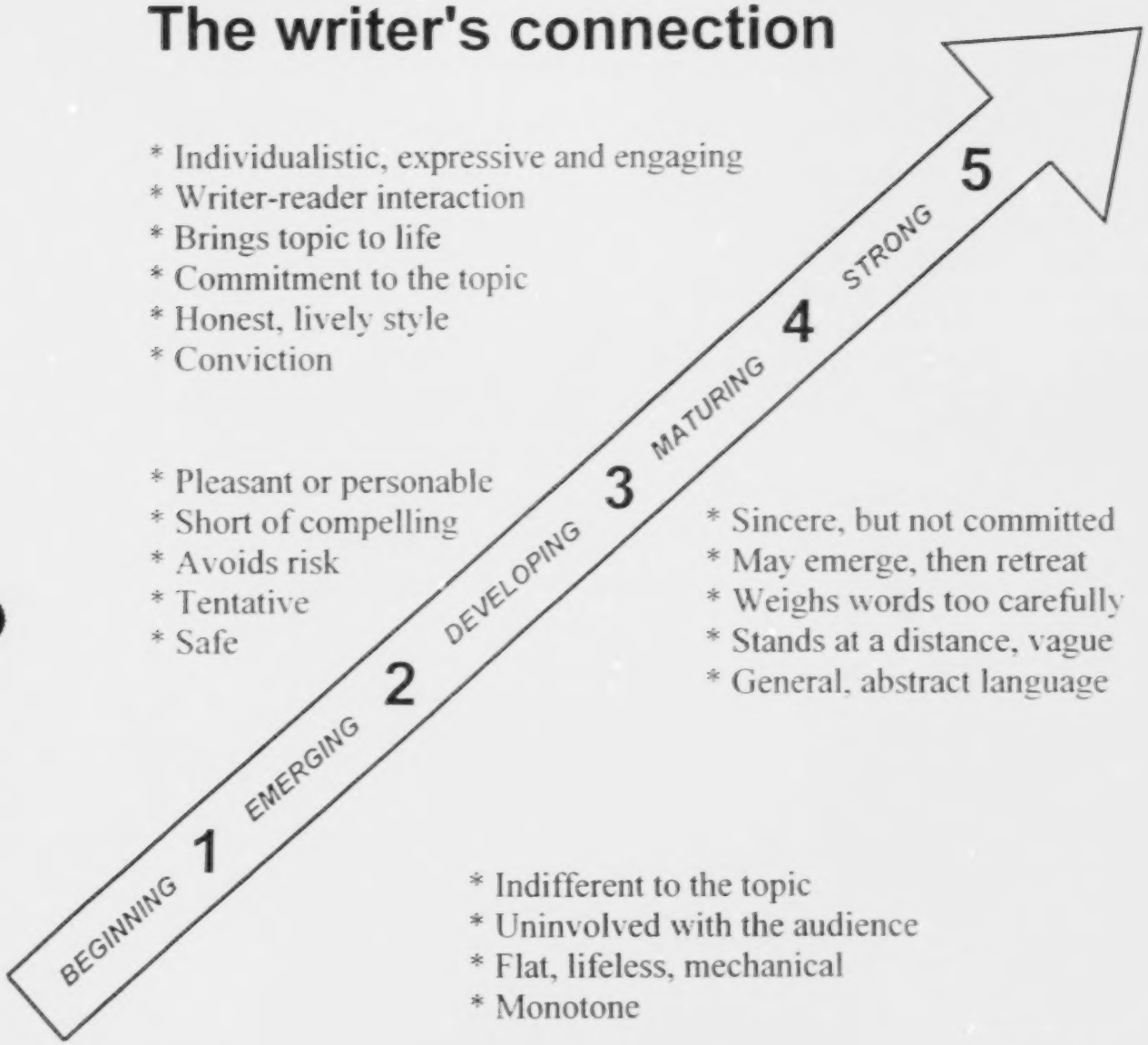
Voice

The writer's connection



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ANALYTIC SCORING GUIDE*

CONVENTIONS

5: The writer demonstrates a good grasp of standard writing conventions (grammar, capitalization, punctuation, usage, spelling, paragraphing) and uses them effectively to enhance readability. Errors tend to be so few and minor the reader can easily skim right over them unless specifically searching for them. Only light editing would be required to polish the text for publication.

- Standard usage is correct and contributes to clarity and style.
- Punctuation is smooth and guides the reader through the text.
- Spelling is generally correct, even on more difficult words.
- Paragraphing tends to reinforce the organizational structure.
- The writer may manipulate conventions – particularly grammar – for stylistic effect.

3: The writer shows reasonable control over a limited range of standard writing conventions. Errors are numerous or serious enough to be somewhat distracting, but the writer also handles some conventions well. However, the paper would require moderate editing prior to publication.

Problems with grammar or usage are not serious enough to distort meaning.

- Terminal (end-of-sentence) punctuation is almost always correct; internal punctuation (commas, apostrophes, semi-colons) may be incorrect or missing.
- Spelling is usually correct (or reasonably phonetic) on common words.
- Paragraphs sometimes run together or begin in the wrong places.
- The paper seems to reflect attempted, but not extensive or thorough, editing.

1: Errors in spelling, punctuation, usage and grammar, capitalization, and/or paragraphing repeatedly distract the reader and make the text difficult to read. Extensive editing would be required to polish the text for publication. More than one of the following problems is likely to be evident:

- Errors in standard usage are very noticeable and may affect meaning.
- Punctuation (including terminal punctuation) is often missing or incorrect.
- Spelling errors are frequent, even on common words.
- Paragraphing is irregular or so frequent that it does not relate to organization of the text.
- The reader must read once to decode, then again for meaning.

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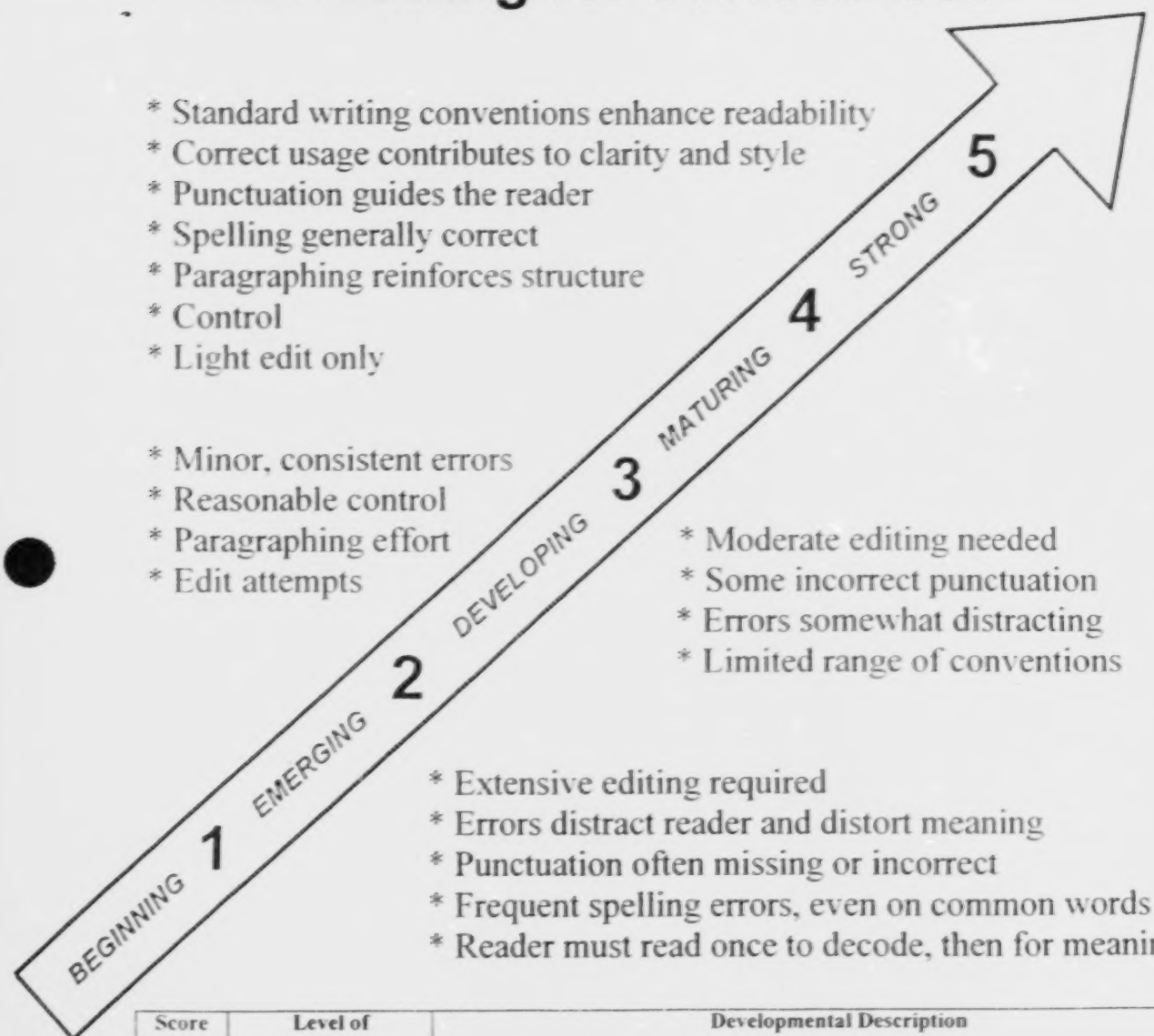
Conventions

Proofreading for correctness



* Standard writing conventions enhance readability
* Correct usage contributes to clarity and style
* Punctuation guides the reader
* Spelling generally correct
* Paragraphing reinforces structure
* Control
* Light edit only

* Minor, consistent errors
* Reasonable control
* Paragraphing effort
* Edit attempts

* Moderate editing needed
* Some incorrect punctuation
* Errors somewhat distracting
* Limited range of conventions

* Extensive editing required
* Errors distract reader and distort meaning
* Punctuation often missing or incorrect
* Frequent spelling errors, even on common words
* Reader must read once to decode, then for meaning

Score	Level of Development	Developmental Description
1	BEGINNING	Searching, exploring, struggling - looking for a sense of purpose or way to begin
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Eleventh Grade Sample Papers
Topics A and B

The "Topic 11-A" papers on the following pages were written in response to the following prompt:

Because middle school or junior high is so different from high school, many freshmen or sophomores have some trouble adjusting to high school. Explain some of the most important of these differences to an incoming freshman or sophomore so that his first year of high school will be successful.

Topic 11-A-6

WRITING TEST - TOPIC A

Of course you're pleased that you are no longer in middle/junior high. You no longer have to deal with the same old obnoxious students that you've gone to school with for three years, for you are going to high school. You feel so warm and bubbly inside, because everything is going to be simply grand. You'll become (or date) a cheerleader, and you'll be valedictorian. You will be the most popular girl in the school, if not in the history of school itself. You can't stop singing "Everything Is Beautiful," because everything is fun & right!

However, you should stop all of this daydreaming and concentrate about high school life. Since someone who has been there/done it for three years: it's rough. There are tons of things to worry about.

On the top of the list is the avoidance of bodily injury. That problem has a simple solution: don't make direct eye contact. It may be construed as a challenge to someone's prowess, resulting in several broken bones.

Secondly, there are grades to face now. You may think you had to worry about grades in junior high, but this was nothing. There marks mean the difference between graduation, college, a good job and a happy life, or an eternity of working at International House of Pizza.

Lastly, there is a social life. Really, who needs popularity? You do, that's who. You must carefully choose which organizations you join, which clothes you wear, and which people to associate with. These decisions must be made in the first ten minutes of high school, lest you be branded an anti-social loser pig.

As you can see, high school is not as easy as you first thought. However, if you play your cards right, you may live through it.

Six papers are creative, original and insightful. They surprise us with words and phrases and their twists and turns. Lines make us laugh, sigh with recognition, and perhaps even disagree. While a *six* paper does not have to be perfect, this piece shows a writer in nearly complete control. She begins by painting a mental picture of an idealized high school experience and follows that with a warning. With tongue-in-cheek throughout, she warns of the pitfalls of high school. The organization is unobtrusive, but certainly effective. Each of the three warning paragraphs contains some wise advice, or more accurately some wise-cracking advise. Truly, all the parts of this piece work together to form an impressive whole: the ideas are creative, and often very funny; the organization is effective and sophisticated; the personality of the writer shines through her words brightly; and the matter of mechanics and grammar are handled with ease.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Topic 11-A-5

WRITING TEST - TOPIC A

My little freshman friends are so eager in middle school, eh? Well don't worry, high school is much better. Prepare to mature very quickly the first year, because there is much to be experienced. People in high school begin to differ much more than they did in middle school and everyone needs to deal with everyone else one way or another.

I would recommend to my little friends to avoid violence. Although sometimes an alternative violence can lead to counter violence which can lead to death, remain disciplined to achive whatever goals you have set for yourself (you being the freshmen) and not what people others have set for you.

The only other thing to do in high school is relax. I'm not saying become inept and weak-minded, I'm just saying take five minutes out a day to breathe properly and realize high school isn't the end (thank god).

A *five* paper is generally a strong paper that is very coherent and organized. The writer seems to be in control of where he/she wants the paper to go, although the sense of control is not so strongly apparent as in a *six*. The reader gets an idea of the writer behind the words; the paper has a personality, a voice. These are not perfect, error-free papers; the mistakes that are made are very few and/or minor.

The 11-A-5 example starts off with a wonderfully cynical opening sentence directed toward that innocent, the freshman, and is followed by another rather dire warning. It is here that we really encounter our first minor problem with this piece, because the author suddenly seems to lose his focus a bit. We are not quite certain what he might mean by his statement, "people in high school begin to differ much more than they did in middle school." As readers, we would appreciate some explanation of this rather cryptic paragraph, thus restoring some of the sense of control noted earlier, but again he seems unable to maintain the tone throughout, because, in his next sentence, his reference to violence suddenly becomes quite serious. Although his observation is definitely true, we are left wondering if we are to see this as humorous. This author's control is wavering. The control returns, though, in that final paragraph where he advises the freshman to relax, perhaps his best advice of all. So, even though this author cannot manipulate language as well as the author of the *six* example, we still have a piece which is quite well done.

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Topic 11-A-4

WRITING TEST - TOPIC A

Being a freshmen in highschool has many challenges since you are the smallest in the school, you tend to get pushed around or lost in the hallways. You also get put down by older students. Being a freshmen in highschool also has its advantages. Like in middle school you had to eat in the lunch room. Well in highschool you can eat anywhere you want. Just as long as you are back in time for your next hour class. Another advantage is you can drink soda for lunch and if your teacher is cool you can drink in class. Also if your teacher is cool you can chew gum or eat candy in class. But you can't bring walkmans to class or computers or school company. Being in high-school they do give a lot of work. Especially if you have a D.S. or Distinguished Scholar class. Here. You Usually get a lot of work in English and Math. But it's always fun to take an elective class. So stay in school and survive that freshmen year.

Four papers are adequate; they deal with the topic and they are satisfactory, yet they do contain mistakes. There are some grammar and spelling errors, but overall they are still adequate papers. They are polished enough to be acceptable, but they don't display any qualities that make them outstanding.

"Adequate" is about all the enthusiasm we can muster for example 11-A-4. We see clearly that this piece addresses the topic, as the author offers advice to an incoming freshman. The author has a pattern of organization in mind, too. We can see that the author first discusses the challenges of high school, and then the advantages. This pattern does break down somewhat near the end of the piece where he seems briefly to revert to the challenges portion of the pattern rather than concluding with the advantages section. This occurs when he discusses the homework one would have to complete in high school. However, this slight breakdown in the organizational pattern is not serious enough to cause any misunderstanding or confusion on the reader's part. Usually the language is clear enough that we understand all the author's points, but there are also some instances of ineffective diction, as in the sentence, "Being in high school they do give a lot of work." Grammar and mechanics errors are numerous. Sentence fragments and misspellings are frequent. Despite our lack of enthusiasm for the quality of this piece, however, we must admit that the student has successfully conveyed his message for his younger counterpart to, "stay in school and survive that freshmen year."

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

WRITING TEST - TOPIC A

There are alot of differences between High School and Middle School. In High School for the most part Teachers leave you alone, they don't bother you what you Should and Should not be doing. You becom more involved in High School with the diffrent clubs and Sports, and at lunch with all of this you don't just Sit around. You met alot more people, and it is alot easier to become Aquainted with the Seniors. High School students are do tend to be ruder than Middle School students espically the Sophmores. In High School you are not just placed into a course. You choose which Maths, Science, and English class you like. There are more elective Courses like Art, Drama, Music, Computer Programing etc. As you can see High School has its bad and good points, but it is usually alot more fun.

The *three* papers tend to use limited language. There are no surprises or anything that engages the reader. There are mistakes in the authors' sentences, including incorrect punctuation and run-on sentences. The ideas are not developed in an interesting way to make the reader want to continue reading. If a paper is scored a *three*, it is considered inadequate.

The 11-A-3 paper "addresses the topic but does not display mature style or well-developed content." The language here is "limited, simplistic, mundane, or otherwise inappropriate," as is certainly apparent in a sentence such as, "High school students are do tend to be ruder then Middle School students espicaliy the Sophmores." In addition, the sentence structure of this writer is often convoluted, if not downright run-on, as in the statement: "In High School for the most part teachers leave you alone, they don't bother you what you should and should not be doing." These kinds of errors are frequent enough that even though they do not "impede meaning," they certainly demonstrate "consistent misunderstanding of the conventions."

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Topic 11-A-2

WRITING TEST - TOPIC A

An alumnae of the he or her freshmen year
on highschool has, by the ninth or tenth grade,
generally has experienced, prior to highschool, changes
in his/her schooling, whether to be that of transferring
from one school to another or that of graduating
from grade school to middle school. It would seem
practical, simply to be able to lay out a system
of regulations which must be obeyed in corelation
to a list of resulting consequences for those incoming
freshmen/sophmores.

The authors of *two* papers attempt to address the topic, but usually haven't gotten a clear idea where they want their ideas to go. The pieces have little detail and very little development to draw a reader in. There are serious problems with sentences, such as run-ons, fragments, and incorrect punctuation that interfere with the reader's understanding and enjoyment of the piece. Example 11-A-2 most definitely "reveals serious and persistent problems in communications." Although we cannot really say that the language is "simplistic," as the rubric suggests, we can certainly see that it is "inappropriate." This student seems to use language carelessly, without concern for meaning: "It would seem practical, simply to be able to lay out a system of regulations which must be obeyed in coralation to a list of resulting consequences for those incoming freshmen/sophmores." We can guess that this means something such as "new students must obey the rules," but still we're not certain. We might also imagine that this student is attempting to impress us with his vocabulary. Hopefully, the score of two on this piece sends him the message that he must have an idea and state it clearly in order to achieve a passing score on this test.

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Topic 11-A-1

WRITING TEST - TOPIC A

the many things for thoos peoples when will they incoming to high shool of the middle school or junior high are very different for what in this school are here bery much people big which they. The other's differences for thoos peoples is the time of enter, because is before of the hour, what thoos student's come to lost school. when will thos student's come here to this school the firs day's of class they will only want to play or don't enter to he class or other's things. they don't will want study, but can be no check the home work's or don't puch attension a the teacher's in the class room. thoos student writhing what the rules of this school is igual thant the other's school, the principil when will enter the other year, he whant take more security's to puch in the school, take more time to student's puch many progrems hispanish or others things. the firs day of class, her explain the rules that new student's he talk to we the new progrem's or new class, tell we the very importan for we the credits.

Papers scored as a *one* are extremely weak. The writers do not make it at all clear to the reader what they are trying to say. Ideas are very difficult, if not impossible, to follow and understand. There are so many errors in all areas that getting through the paper is largely a matter of decoding.

The 11-A-1 example "overwhelms the reader with serious violations of sentence structure, grammar/usage, and mechanics." After we have completed the first sentence of this piece, we know that this writer has extreme difficulty communicating in writing: "the many things for thoos peoples when will they incoming to high shool of the middle school or Junior high are very different for what in this school are here bery much people big which they." While we are fairly sure that the author is addressing the topic, since we see the word "school" repeated several times, we wonder about the rest of the ideas and development of this piece. Probably the most blatant problem is this student's confused diction, leading us to guess that his/her first language is not English. Despite the fact that we are sympathetic to this possible difficulty and would like to provide encouragement, we cannot allow this to overshadow the fact that this writing is not proficient.

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The samples in this section were written in response to the following prompt:

TOPIC 11-B: It seems that money plays an important role in every person's life. Tell about an experience in which you earned, lost, spent, saved, or were given money. Also be sure to tell what you learned from this experience.

Topic 11-B-6

I have never been good at spending money wisely. I'm too impulsive. If it looks nice, buy it, was my motto. I cannot go to a mall and leave with money in my pocket. This was my basic problem; I felt that leaving a store with money in my pocket was some kind of viliganous act so as a rule I never did. Instead of just buying what I needed, I would buy extras I did not need, and whatever else caught my eyes. Spending money like this was no problem until my mom decided to change my ways. The day before school began I went to the mall to buy a pair of shoes. The shoes cost ninety dollars, and my mom sent me to the mall with a one hundred dollar bill, and a warning. "Bring back the ten dollars for gas money, or you will walk to school all next week," said she. I bought the shoes, but being foolish I also bought a nice shirt for ten dollars, thinking my moms warning was a jest. Upon returning home, I found her warning to be true, and that I would be walking to school the first week. No problem, though I. how bad can it be? That week I walked through mud, dirt, water, gravel, and even through an equine leftover. This ruined my new shoes and was important to me because it taught me to less impulsive.

The 11-B-6 example is not quite as strong as the 11-A-6; it therefore serves to illustrate that there is a range of responses within a single score. While 11-A-6 is an extremely strong *six*, 11-B-6 may fall in the lower part of the *six* range. Clearly, this is an excellent writer who has crafted an effective response to the prompt. He begins by identifying his major flaw in his ability to handle money matters: "I'm too impulsive." With this organizing idea, he proceeds to relate an anecdote meant to illustrate this impulsiveness. He draws in his reader with his mother's warnings and then brings home the final irony of his experience in his closing sentence. Because he had no money, he had to walk to school for a week, thus ruining his new shoes. Although there are some grammatical errors in this piece, this is a writer who can organize his thoughts, illustrate them with specific examples and even demonstrate his understanding of the difficult idea of irony.

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Topic 11-B-5

Every sixteen year old feels the need for a car the day they turn sixteen. I know I did. I started working at the age of fifteen so that I could have saved up enough money for a down payment on a new Camaro. I wanted to make payments and pay the high insurance that I would of had to do in order to keep my new Camaro. The only problem (I thought I was faced with) was seeing how I am a full time student involved in cheerleading, volleyball, track and Student council how would I work all of the time needed to pay the bills on my new Camaro? I wasn't thinking logically. I just wanted a new Camaro for all of my friends to ohhh and ahhh at. I continued to work, but as disappointed as I was at the time, my new Camaro ended up to be a Plymouth Duster. I eventually was satisfied with my car. I am now at the age of seventeen glad that I didn't get my new Camaro.

The author of 11-B-5 shows a strong sense of ideas. This writer has obviously learned a hard lesson about the dangers of attempting to impress her friends with material objects. Through her experience, she has learned to accept that sometimes fantasy Camaros must become real-life Plymouth Dusters. Although there are some fairly serious grammatical problems here: "would of had to do" and a pronoun-antecedent problem in "every sixteen year old feels the need for a car the day they turn sixteen, the overall organization and clarity of the piece is very good. Although this writer does not attempt much in the way of manipulating language for effect, she still manages to tell her story in a way that is clear and comprehensible. There are some strong moments in this piece, such as the sentence, "I just wanted a new Camaro for all of my friends to ohhh and ahhh at." Not only has she reached a rather mature understanding of her own actions, but she has expressed that understanding in a clever, original sentence. This writer's ideas are showcased here. The style of the piece is secondary, but there are still enough moments of excellence to keep the piece sagely in the *five* range.

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Topic 11-B-4

Money to me is like a drug and from time to time can be very addicting. Especially when your in desparate need of money and you have to make a choice of whats right and whats wrong.

I remember this day like it was yesterday. But it was a year ago. And I was in desparate need of money for my family to pay for bills and food. And that day I just got off from my job at Park Lane mall walking in the parking lot to the car. By my car door there was a purse that was lay on the ground with no owner around. I looked to see the identification of the owner and found six, crisp, and clean one-hundred dollar bills in the purse. I was so happy at the moment because this was exctly what I needed to buy my family's bills and get us out of debt, but something came over me and I realized my heart said no. Because my mother didnt teach me to be dishonest.

So I turned it in to the police and come to find out, two weeks later my mother hit six hundred dollars on the slot machine. So what goes around comes around!

Example 11-B-4 is a clear instance of a writer who has great strengths in some areas of his writing, yet who also exhibits some overwhelming weaknesses. The ideas of this particular piece are compelling, especially the powerful opening sentence. The strength of ideas is also apparent in his description of those six "crisp, and clean one-hundred dollar bills in the purse." We have a clear image of a young person standing there in the parking lot, wrestling with options for that money. Despite the clarity of this author's thought processes, we cannot help but notice the serious flaws in grammar. The spelling and punctuation are quite problematic and the piece contains numerous sentence fragments. Unlike 11-A-4, which is adequate in all aspect of writing, 11-B-4 is excellent in some ways and abysmal in others. One can see that this author would benefit from an analytical trait model summary, to help isolate the weaknesses and build on the strengths of this piece.

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Everytime I get money, I spent it. Even if it is earned or gave to me from someone. My dad yells at me for doing this. But why save money, when you're just going to end up spending it anyway?

Now I realize what things I could of bought if I only saved that money, instead of spending it on junk food or something. I need to learn how to save money before I go out on my own. Because one day I will need something and I won't have the money for it.

The problems with example 11-B-3 are not so much in the area of mechanics and grammar as in the realm of ideas. This paper "displays minimal development," as the rubric suggests in its description of a *three*. The writer realizes that her problem with money results from spending funds foolishly, but she gives us very little detail about the exact nature of the problem. She does say that she would often spend money on "junk food or something," but beyond that, she does not provide much support for her general statements. She realizes that she does need to learn how to save money, "Because one day I will need something and I won't have the money for it," but again, she has no specific plan of operation in mind. We would simply like this author to fill in those missing details. Alone, this lack of detail might not be enough to drop this paper into the inadequate range, but coupled with consistent problems in grammar such as sentence fragments, this paper displays serious enough weaknesses to deem it not proficient.

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The exference I have Learned when I have money my grandma gave me $80.00 for her Birthday and I kept on spending It. Before I knew It my my money was gone. one Time I had 20.00's and I Lost It. I should have put It in my wallet and kept It in there when I got home I got in trouble but that taugt me not to put money in Empty pockets. when I go out I will put my money In my wallet

In addition to language which is "highly limited, simplistic, or otherwise inappropriate," the 11-B-2 paper "contains serious flaws in development, organization, and coherence." The writer begins by telling about an experience when his grandmother gave him $80.00, but rather than explaining this incident in any detail, he soon redirects readers to an occasion when he had $20.00 and lost it. In addition, this author commits "consistent violations in sentence structure, grammar/usage, and mechanics that impede understanding." We can see this clearly in the following excerpt: "I should have put It in my wallet and kept It in there when I got home I got in trouble but that taugt me not to put money in Empty pockets." No only does this author run complete sentences together, but he is also ignoring some basic rules for capitalization.

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Topic 11-B-1

My exsecience with money was wen I had
savd up alot of money and I bot a gitar.
then a feaw yeurs later I bot a anplefir.
It is importavt to me bicuse I wse it alot
and it is fun to plye with

The 11-B-1 paper is "extremely weak" especially in terms of development. The author mentions that he "had savd up a lot of money and [he] bot a gitar." Rather than giving us any notion at all about why he did this, he simply goes on to another experience: "then a feaw(?) years later I bot a amplofir." There is virtually no development of ideas and those ideas that are present are obscured by the overwhelming grammatical errors. Again, we do have enough mention of the topic to convince us that the writer does understand the topic, but this student's writing definitely "fails to provide adequate information."

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Twelfth Grade Sample Papers

The following twelfth grade papers are samples of writing that minimally passed or failed the writing proficiency examination. They include suggestions for improvement.

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TOPIC 12-A: Everybody makes up excuses. Think of an excuse that you or someone you know has used. Describe the situation and the excuse.

It was Tuesday and I just got out of School at 12:54 because I Don't Have a Last Period.

So I went home Knowing I had to be back at 1:30 so I can Pick up my Sister. Well It Didn't Happen Like that I went to the Store to buy a drink. On the way to my friend house.

I Stayed for a while well It felt like a while. Bye the time I realized I had to Pick up my Sister It was 2:50 So I Strolled on down to the School to see if my Sister was Still There. She wasn't, she had just left.

So I went home and my mom was right at the door weighting for me. She said why Didn't you Pick up your Sister. My "EXCUSE" was The Car over heated and I had to let It Sit there intell It cool Down So I can put water in too It. So I had gotten out of Trubble once Again.

I know someone who always has excuses. My father, he's the only man in the world that I know's has a big excuse for everything. My father has a very big problem with telling the truth. he always tells me or someone else one thing and then does another. for instance one day I had a very important tournament to attend. My father being the very poor example of a man, said he would take me. He also told his wife which happens to be my new stepmother that he would take her another place on the same day at the same time. When the day finally came for us to go to this important event, he told me that he could'nt go because there were some important business that he had to take care of. After words I asked him if he could get my stepmother to take me. Then he told me that he did'nt the car could make due to a minor problem with the transmission.

So as you can see my father is the king of excuses. Even though this situation happened a while back. The excuses still go on until this very day.

Sample 1 received the score of *three* from two different readers. The following bullet from the *three* descriptor on the rubric seems particularly relevant: "Contains flaws in sentence structure, grammar/usage and mechanics that do not impede meaning. It indicates some consistent misunderstanding of the conventions." Though some readers might argue that the writer's meaning is clear, the presentation of those ideas is riddled with errors.

Instructional focus: Work harder on building an understanding of what makes a sentence complete, incomplete or fun-on. Learn the differences in spelling and meaning of very common words, for example, "bye" for "by". Ask yourself, does every sentence contain a subject, a verb, and express a complete thought?

Sample 2 received a *four* from one reader and a *three* from another. The paper starts off strongly with the author identifying how her father uses excuses. In fact, the errors here are minimal, until the reader gets further into the body of the paper. For example, the sentence "...he couln'nt go because there were some important business that he had to take care of" is clearly flawed grammatically. Further along, she states, "Then told me he did'nt the car could make due to a minor problem with the transmission." Words definitely seem to be missing here. However, these errors do not keep this from being a paper that adequately addresses the topic.

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My friends and I went out during the summer one time and I was supposed to be home at 12:00 A.M. Well one thing led to another and I didn't get home until 12:45. I told my mom that I had fallen asleep at my friends house which I didn't and that I also had gotten pulled over on my way home but the cop let me off easy and without a ticket.

One of my biggest problems at school is being late. I dread waking up in the morning & dragging myself into the shower and then out the door to school. This morning was one of those mornings. I finally got up and got dressed. I sat down after my shower in front of the television and drank my instant breakfast. I looked up at the clock and figured I got plenty of time. I finish and grab my books as I walk out the door.

On my way to school one of my friends then and gives me a ride. When we get to school no one really feels like going in to do the exams or work so we just a few people and stand around talking. When we decided to walk into school the door was stood there and said some thing along the lines of you boys got a good excuse for your tardy. One of my friends yelled excitedly "You see there was this big wreck and the traffic backed up I barely escaped with my life" she looked at him with a disturbed look as if she was going to explode and bluted "whatever just get in class"

Sample 3 received a *three* from two different readers. Although the paragraph contains few glaring errors in grammar or usage, it does display "minimal development." The most serious problem in the paper occurs about halfway through the piece, at the point where the author states, "...one thing led to another and I didn't get home until 12:45." Here the reader is left to ponder what might have occurred and never receives a satisfactory resolution to that question anywhere in the remainder of the paragraph.

Instructional focus: Be sure to think carefully about the topic you choose. Then be careful to include enough detail so that your audience can participate in the experience. Ask yourself: Is my topic something I can write about honestly, or will there be too many details that I am not willing to reveal to my audience?

Sample 4 was scored as a *three* by one reader and a *four* by another. There are some flaws here, surely --- the unexplained shift from past to present tense near the end of the first paragraph, and the spelling errors on fairly common words i.e., dicide, feal --- but there are moments of strength as well. The concluding sentence is particularly satisfying and the originality of thought and language lifts this paper into the acceptable range.

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my parents and I work on the days that I have off I like to sleep in, under there is relief. When I get up there is a mess on the floor a little bit I'm told to pick it up & the go and say I wish I shouldn't have to pick it up. Then I get lectured for an hour.

Once I got into high School I realized that I was always making up Some kind of an excuse. From having to use the restroom to wanting to go home. I remember an excuse that would always work. "I do not feel So well." The teachers would always fall for it. I would be Sitting in Class and the teacher would be lecuring about Something. And Frankly I did not want to be there, So I would, Push my Chair back, Rubble over, then rock back and forth As if I was in Some major pain. After getting the teachers attention. I would Slightly put my head up. If he or She was not looking at me, I would Sit up kind of in a Slouched posture. Raise my hand and Say "I do not feel very well", their eyes would widen in to silver dollar Size and respond "Go, hurry up and go to the bathroom." I would Slowly get up and walk to the door with a sickly looking face. Open the door wait for it to shut again and walk down the wall with a bounce in my Step. Because I was finally free and it felt really good.

Sample 5 was scored a *three* by both readers. It fits the bullet under the score of *three* that says, Addresses the topic but does not display mature style or well-developed content." The primary problem here is the tendency to not go beyond the obvious. For instance, what is the mess and who is responsible for it? What is the author lectured about for an hour and by whom? This very short piece poses more questions that it answers. **Instructional focus**: Be a bit more willing to go beyond the basic. Don't assume your readers will necessarily know what you are talking about unless you provide the needed details. With a paper this short, your readers may question just how interested you actually are in passing this test. Ask yourself, have I included enough information to support my general statements?

Sample 6 received a *four* from one reader and a *three* from another. The writing does have some clear weaknesses, especially in the area of sentence structure and conventions. There is a lack of complete sentence form. However, the level of detail present accounts for the "adequate" designation. The specific nature of the wiring makes it very easy for the reader to imagine the situation as this clever writer dupes the teacher into an early dismissal from class.

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Everybody makes up some excuses. When the bowling season came up for my high school, I had to get some days off of work. So I can bowl this season. I told my manager that I was for my high school. I told him that I need some more days off of work. I only need two more days off. I ask for three days off. I was working to much during high school. I told him that I need some more days off of work for my bowling games. I told him that I have a lot of bowling days. He asked me if I will be done my six o'clock? I said No. I didn't want him to know that working a after school job was hard on me. So I told him I had a lot of bowling days during high school I would not like to work that much. This is why I gave this excuse to my manager.

This summer there was this big concert coming to town, it was my friends and my favorite band. We were so stoke about it. When we finally got enough money to get the tickets, we went down and got them. We got front concerts. When the day of the concert finally come around, my friend said that his pet turtle died and he was to depressed to go to the concert with us. I was like no way man. So I went to the concert with my other friend and had a very good time.

Sample 7 was scored *a three* by both readers. Although this writer's meaning is usually clear, problems occur in several areas. First, we are not entirely sure why the writer needs to ask for additional days off. Second, it seems that the paper tends to "digress or ramble," especially in the section where the writer speaks of his/her reluctance to work long hours. Finally, the writer omits endings from words and entire words from sentences, adding to a general sense of confusion.

Instructional focus: Try to proofread more carefully to make certain you haven't left out word endings, words, or phrases. Your eyes have a tendency to miss these sorts of mistakes, so you will have to look for them diligently. Ask yourself, am I actually saying what I think I am saying?

Sample 8 was scored as a *four* by one reader and a *three* by another. Although teetering on the edge of inadequacy, one reader felt that the paper explained the situation and the excuse in enough detail to merit a four. The author does a fairly good job of showing how his sense of anticipation grew as the concert approached and how disappointed he/she was with his/her friend's lame excuse for not being able to attend the event. Because of this, the paper "adequately addresses the topic."

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Everyone has used an excuse to get out of trouble at least once in their lifetime. When I was younger and I was little I used excuses all the time. most of the time it was to keep from getting my friends in trouble. My friends were mostly trouble makers like the town bullies. I never had anything I had an excuse for but I knew it was stupid and I admit it. My friends even had excuses why they smoked and did the things they did. Then I met Steve and Adam and all my friend I have known they really got me involved around on the right track for once. We all smoke pot and we all have our excuses why we do it. So as you have read most people really do use at least one excuse in their lifetime, it not more.

Excuses can be used in many ways and for many reasons. Sometimes the reasons that excuses are used do not directly relate to the situation. For example, an excuse to miss completing a responsibility can be embedded within an situation unrelated such as I could not complete my job because I had another job to do. In this situation the responsibility does not have to be to work. Other excuses stem from the have elements of one responsibility over another.

Excuses never be used in situations where there is why some sort of abuse is involved. If they are not used properly, even under an open can diminish greatly.

Sample 9 was scored as a *three* by two different readers. There are many problems here, but the most serious seems to be in the area of organization. This author seems uncertain whether he wants to write about his friends, the town bullies, or about his smoking habit. By switching back and forth among them, the author leaves us feeling confused. The ideas here show "minimal development," as suggested by one of the bullets under the score of *three* in the rubric.

Instructional focus: Stick to one topic. Be sure not to lose your focus as you write. Ask yourself, does this piece of writing hang together as a whole, or have I gone off in directions that have nothing to do with my original topic?

Sample 10 received a *three* from one reader but a *four* from another, thus moving it into the "acceptable" range. This is not to say that problems don't exist here. For instance, the sentence, "an excuse to miss completing a responsibility can b embedded within a situation unrelated" leaves us shaking our heads, wondering what the author meant. In general, though, the level of vocabulary usage and idea development clearly places this paper a notch above sample 9.

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The final section of *12th Grade Sample Papers* deals with an even more specific audience, the 12th grade or adult student who are limited English proficient writers. The suggestions made following each of these samples indicated explicit strategies that such students might practice before attempting the writing examination. Sometimes, there is very little distinguishing a minimally adequate paper from one that barely fails; a few minor changes can make a difference. These sample papers were written in response to the prompt

TOPIC 12-B: Describe a time when you helped someone else.

A time when I helped someone else happened in my house. My cousin was cutting meat. Then, he took off their fingers. I called an ambulance. The doctor took care of him. After this, I helped him to do finger's exercise everyday. I also carried him to the doctor. My cousin is someone else who I helped a time.

I still remember when I helped this old lady a couple of days ago. It was allready getting dark while I was walking home when sudenly I seene this old lady laying on the side of the road. when I got closer to her. I got more scared because she looked like if she was dead. or hurt. real bad. So I ran to a pay phone that was near where I was and called 9-1-1. asking for help for the poor old lady. After telling them my location I went back and stood with the old lady until the ambulance arrived. then after I went home I felt real proud of what I had done.

Sample 11 was scored a *three* by two different readers. The paper begins with a clear indication of the situation, but then leaves the reader wanting to know more. Someone's fingers have been taken off, but this obviously serious accident is not described further. The lack of information and minimal development, coupled with errors in conventions, lowers the score into the inadequate range. **Instructional focus**: This student might work harder on including more sensory details in the description. Personal feelings or reactions to the accident would help bring it to life, and would engage the reader more. Fairly common words such as "took off" and carried" are either misunderstood or misused. The writer has done a good job, however, with spelling and end punctuation.

Sample 12 received score of *four* and *three*. It goes a little further with development and details, "already getting dark" helps to set the scene and "looked like if she was dead" provides some visual clues for the reader. Adverbs such as "allready," "sudenly," and "more" add secondary level to the descriptions. The writer tells his whole story and how he felt about his behavior without rambling or digressing. He leaves no doubt that he writes from experience. His writing is not error free, but he has command of end punctuation and can combine clauses into complex sentences.

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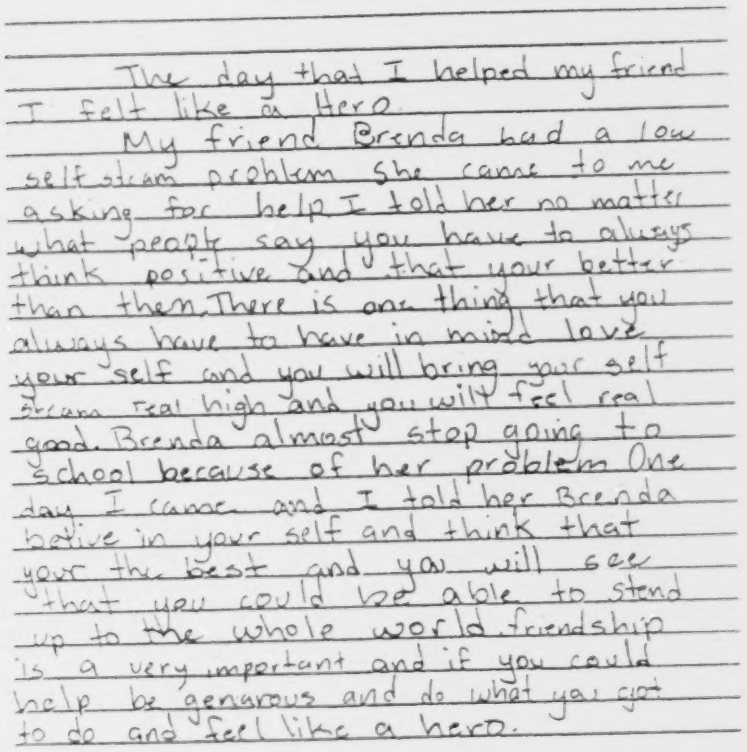
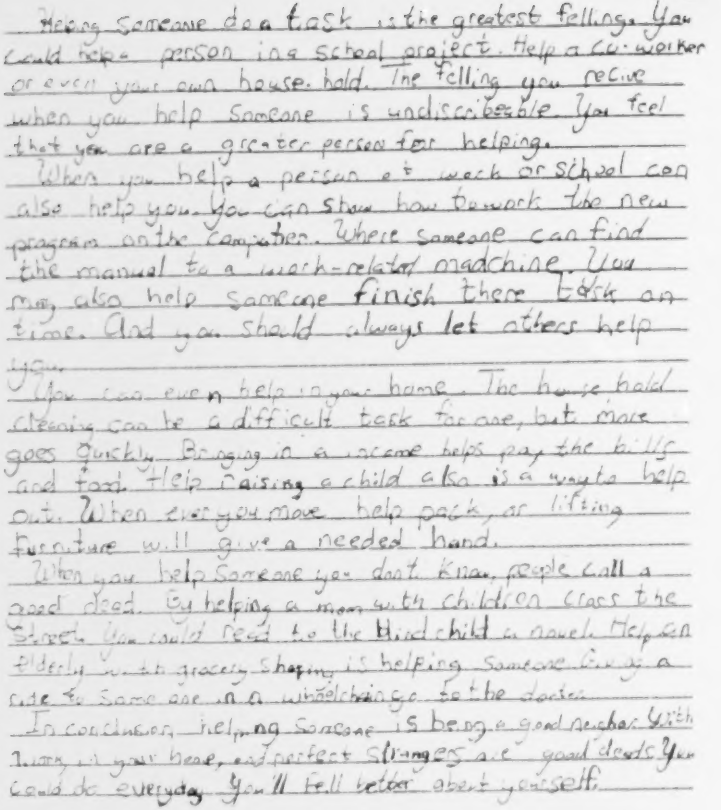


The day that I helped my friend I felt like a Hero

My friend Brenda had a low self steam problem she came to me asking for help I told her no matter what people say you have to always think positive and that your better than them. There is one thing that you always have to have in mind love your self and you will bring your self steam real high and you will feel real good. Brenda almost stop going to school because of her problem One day I came and I told her Brenda belive in your self and think that your the best and you will see that you could be able to stend up to the whole world friendship is a very important and if you could help be genarous and do what you got to do and feel like a hero.



Helping Someone do a task is the greatest fellings. You could help a person in a school project. Help a co-worker or even your own house-hold. The felling you recive when you help Someone is undiscribeable. You feel that you are a greater person for helping.

When you help a person at work or school can also help you. You can show how to work the new programs on the computer. Where someone can find the manual to a work-related machine. You may also help someone finish there task on time. And you should always let others help you.

You can even help in your home. The house hold cleaning can be a difficult task for one, but more goes quickly. Bringing in a income helps pay the bills and food. Help raising a child also is a way to help out. When ever you move help pack, or lifting furniture will give a needed hand.

When you help Someone you don't know people call a good deed. By helping a man with children cross the Street. You could read to the blind child a novel. Help an elderly with the grocery shoping is helping Someone. Give a ride to Some one in a wheelchair go to the doctor.

In conclusion, helping Someone is being a good neighbor. With in your home, and perfect strangers are good deeds. You could do everyday. You'll feli better about yourself.

Sample 13 was scored a *three* by both readers. It focuses on one person's story, but displays minimal development and never gives specifics. Most noticeably, this paper "uses ideas everyone has heard or read before." The same ideas of loving yourself and believing in yourself are repeated three times. The paper contains run-on sentences, spelling errors on high-frequency words, i.e., then for them, stend for stand and contraction confusion, i.e, your for you're. The introductory sentence is the best part of the piece.

Instructional focus: Review some of the rules and practice on commas, end punctuation, and making sure that each period marks the end of a complete thought. Use vocabulary that you are sure you know and you can spell. Practice spelling of common words. This writer could also explain Brenda's problem more clearly; what exactly had been said or done to lower her self-concept.

Sample 14, which received a score of *four* from the first reader and a *three* from the second reader, is far from perfect, but rises into the adequate range for scores by employing the organizational structure of the "five paragraph essay." Notice the way the introduction sets the tone and the conclusion repeats the main idea and brings closure to the topic. Each of the three middle paragraphs takes the idea of helping someone into a different setting and provides clear-cut examples of helpful behaviors. Although a more sophisticated writer might feel restricted by such an obvious structure, the English language learner may find this type of organizational pattern just what is needed to develop a topic adequately.

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"WRITING TEST-TOPIC A"

The Bus Helper

I remember when I was a kid I used to go to the bus station and people that came from others towns I carrie them bags for a little money or a tip. in the town I was born, my family don't have a lot of money so I have to looking for a little extra money for my Family and for me. it was fun sometimes the persons Give me candys, all kinds of food and I feel good helping others; I can not do this everyday only on Saturdays or Sundays or after I got out of the School and then I go to my house and helpe my mother cleaning the bathrooms Train out the trash and wesever a can helpe her. Other time I go to the market with her an helpe her with every thing she needs

A time I remember helping someone else was a few years ago Mary, my friend since kindergarten had a few problems that needed to be taken care of right away She needed money to pay her electricity bill that was past due. Mary ask me for money but, it wasn't easy for me to get it for her.

Mary, came to me because, we been best friends. I didn't tell her that I didn't had money. So I promise I was going to lend it to her as soon as I run to the bank and get it. I was so worried that I didn't know where to get money from or who to ask.

Finally, I ponded all the jewerly I had, but it wasn't easy because I had to tell my mom, so she can go with me because I was still under age. By the time my mom agreed to go with me, it was just on time for them to close the ponding store. We did get the money after all and my friend never had her electricity shut down.

I was glad to help her because it made me feel really good specially her thanks

Sample 15 was scored as a *three* by both the readers who read it. Initially, the writer identifies a way he has provided help to others, and engages the reader with the details such as receiving candy and food for his services. However, as the paper continues it digresses and ramble into other areas i.e., helping at home with cleaning the bathrooms and taking out the trash, until it ends far from its starting point. The paper also contains run-ons, spelling errors on high-frequency words i.e. helpe for help, giv for give and even simple words are misused, i.e., a for I and an for and. **Instructional focus**: To improve this paper, the writer could concentrate on the topic first identified, helping at the bus station. Without the irrelevancies in the final third of the paper , this example would have addressed the topic adequately with only a little more development. Work on end punctuation would also help raise the scores; each complete thought needs to be terminated with punctuation. With more practice on high-frequency word, plurals and verb tenses, this writer stands a good chance of adequately expressing his experiences.

Sample 16 was judged adequate with scores of *three* from the first reader and *four* from the second reader. Although this writer has not completely mastered English verb tenses and mistakes pond for pawn, her errors do not impede meaning. The ideas are presented in a logical sequence and suggest sincerity. More difficult vocabulary, i.e., electricity and kindergarten, is employed correctly at least part of the time, and the length and complexity of the sentence structure indicate that adequate control of the language has been achieved.

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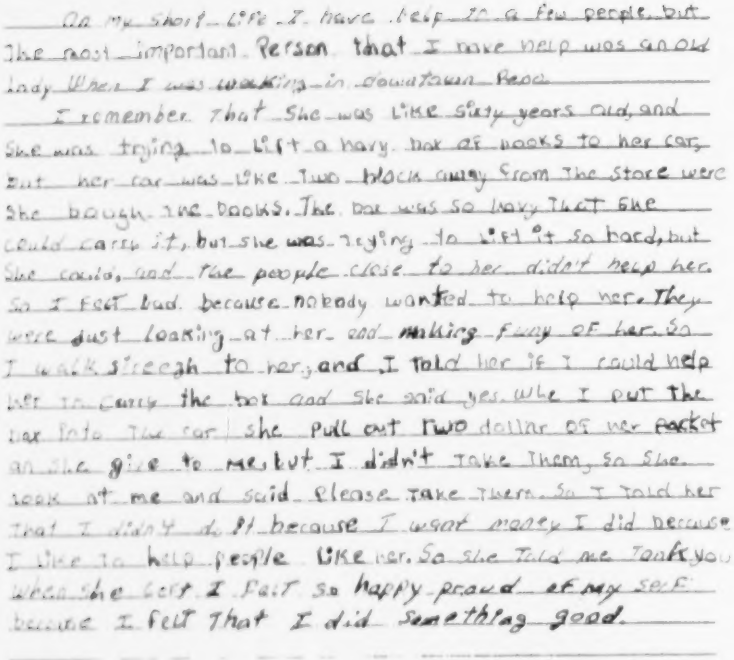
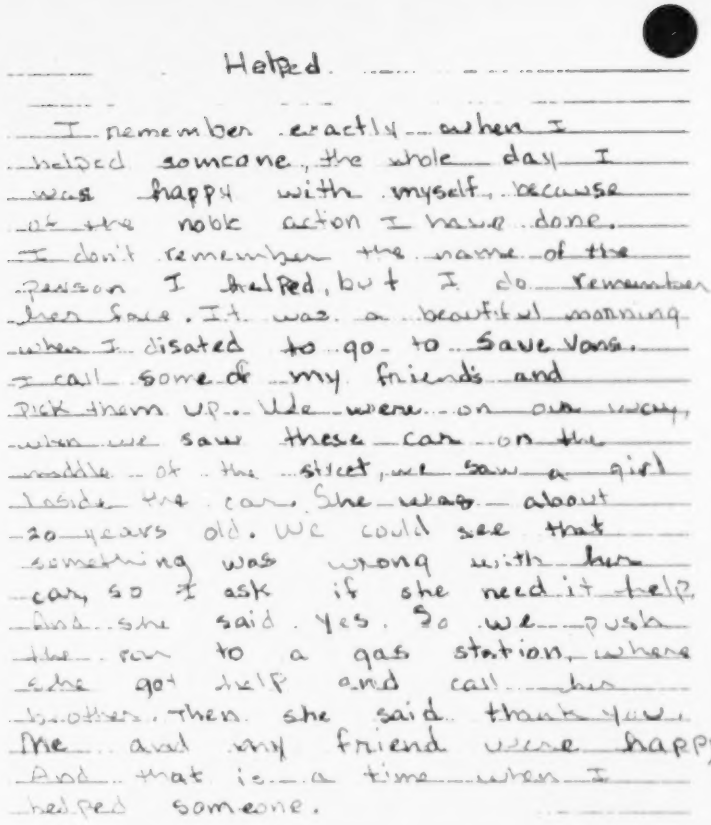


On my short life I have help to a few people but the most important Person that I have help was an old lady When I was working in downtown Reno

I remember that she was like sixty years old and she was trying to lift a heavy box of books to her car but her car was like two blocks away from the store were she baught the books. The box was so heavy that she could carry it, but she was trying to lift it so hard, but she could, and the people close to her didn't help her. So I feel bad because nobody wanted to help her. They were just looking at her and making fuay of her So I walk streagh to her, and I told her if I could help her to carry the box and she said yes. Whe I put the box into the car she pull out two dollar of her packet an she give to me but I didn't take them, so she look at me and said please take them. So I told her that I didn't do it because I want money I did because I like to help people like her. So she told me Tanks you. When she left I felt so happy proud of my self because I felt that I did something good.



Helped

I remember exactly when I helped someone, the whole day I was happy with myself, because of the noble action I have done. I don't remember the name of the person I helped, but I do remember her face. It was a beautiful morning when I disated to go to Save Vons. I call some of my friends and pick them up. We were on our way, when we saw these car on the middle of the street, we saw a girl beside the car. She was about 20 years old. We could see that something was wrong with her car, so I ask if she need it help and she said yes. So we push the car to a gas station, where she got help and call her sisters. Then she said thank you. Me and my friend were happy And that is a time when I helped someone.

Sample 17 earned two scores of *three* from the readers who read it. Several weaknesses keep this paper from being judged adequate. There are numerous spelling errors, and confusions exist in the usage of common words, i.e., making funy for making fun, told her for asked her, an for a and The writer has omitted the word not when it is clearly needed to form the contraction couldn't and other words are left out "I did [it] because I like to help people...").

Instructional focus: Perhaps this writer just needs to practice more extensive editing, especially to check spelling and to be sure that no words are left out. The use of the word "like" in place of "about" shows that the writer has not yet distinguished between casual spoken usage and standard written English. Although none of the errors impede meaning, the widespread misunderstanding of conventions indicates further practice is needed.

Sample 18, entitled "Helped", received one score of *four* and one of *three*. The language is generally used clearly and sometimes the choice of words is a cut above adequate; "noble action" received praise from both readers. The self-disclosure at the beginning of the piece helps hook the reader, "I don't remember the name of the person I helped, but I do remember her face" and leads the way to a satisfactory development of the topic. This writer stays focused and does not digress. Although there are problems with past tense verb endings, these do not distract enough to lower the score below the adequate range.

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Eighth Grade Sample Papers
Topics A and B

Additional Scores for Samples

Page	Ideas	Org.	Voice	Conv		Page	Ideas	Org.	Voice	Conv
40	5 0	4.5	5.0	5.0		60	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0
41	4 0	4.5	4.0	4.0		61	4.0	4.0	4.5	4.5
42	3 0	3.0	3.0	3.5		62	3.0	2.5	3.0	2.0
43	2 5	2.0	3.5	1.0		63	2.0	2.0	2.5	2.5
44	1 0	1.0	2.0	2.0		64	1.0	1.0	1.5	1.5
45	4 5	4.5	5.0	4.5		65	4.5	5.0	4.5	4.5
46	4 5	3.5	4.0	3.5		66	4.5	4.0	3.5	3.5
47	3.5	3.0	3.0	2.5		67	2.5	3.0	3.0	3.0
48	2.5	2.0	2.0	2.5		68	3.0	2.0	3.5	2.0
49	1.5	1.0	1.0	1.0		69	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
50	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0		70	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0
51	4.0	3.5	4.0	4.0		71	4.5	4.5	4.0	4.5
52	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0		72	3.5	4.0	3.0	3.5
53	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0		73	2.0	1.5	2.0	2.0
54	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0		74	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.5
55	5.0	4.5	5.0	5.0		75	5.0	4.5	5.0	5.0
56	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.5		76	3.5	3.5	3.5	4.0
57	3.0	3.0	2.5	3.0		77	1.0	1.5	1.5	3.0
58	2.5	3.0	3.0	2.0		78	2.0	3.0	2.0	2.0
59	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0		79	1.5	1.5	1.0	1.0

The "Topic 8-A" papers on the following pages were written in response to the following prompt:
Describe your favorite childhood toy, object, or place. Describe your choice and tell about so your reader can understand why it was so important to you.
Writing Sample 8-A-I-5

"Oh great not again!" I said to myself as I was walking to my favorite place. My shoes' were just filled with sand for the third time. The sun beating softly at my back, as I continued to walk up the sandy mountain I say to myself, 'Why do I even bother?" I simply think to relax and be alone. When I finally make it to the top I stand on a huge white rock, look down and see the best view of Washoe Valley. you can get. Two beautiful lakes glistening as the sun shines strongly down on them. Little houses together but not to close like in a painting. When I turn around I see the untouched wilderness mountains with sagebrush all around.

Here at the top of the mountain is where I find the sanity to be me.

Living with six kids in your family it is not exactly quiet. When I get in trouble and need to think who needs to say sorry. (Or just need to think) I just go to the top of my mountain and wait for about an hour so I won't fight again. Then slowly I walk back home. My mountain is something I will have forever. The view and the precious memory of my favorite place.

This paper was rated a *five* in ideas and content. As the *five* descriptor from the rubric suggests, we would expect a *five* paper to hold the reader's attention and to include relevant anecdotes and details. This sample provides an excellent illustration of the power of detail. We are with this writer as she makes her way to the top of the hill. We can feel the sand in her shoes and the effort she expends on her way up. The pay-off for the reader, as well as for her, is in the view that awaits her at the top. We can feel that this author is writing from experience, and the writer seems in control throughout, molding her piece to achieve the desired effect. Note especially the "pivot" sentence that we find about midway through, "Here at the top of the mountain is where I find the sanity to be me." After this sentence, the writer proceeds to connect the superficial meaning of the experience --- the spectacular view from the top of the hill---to the true, underlying meaning of the event---the opportunity that the time alone affords her to assess and understand the meaning of her more chaotic life at home. This is a writer who is in control of her ideas and who can manipulate them for effect.

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Writing Sample 8-A-I-4

Snoopy was my favorite toy. It was a pass-me-down from my brother; at the time it was still brandnewish excluding a few wear downs here and there but it suited me just fine. Overtime I enjoyed talking to this silent companion of mine. Its big brown eyes and torn off rear where stuffing was coming out, gazed at me as I told him the exciting points of my day. Sitting on my bed with his blue and white striped overalls on, I looked at him as my best of friends because I never argued or had a quarrel with him. Snoopy was often an escape from all the bad things such as my arguing parents, my mean older brother, or the boogie man under my bed. Though as time moved on, I made new friends and bluntly just grew out of Snoopy, but the joyous memories of him will always remain.

The *four* example paper is also clear and focused, but the author does not possess quite the sense of control that the author of the *five* paper exhibited. The ideas are developed clearly, but the paper lacks the overriding sense of manipulation for effect that we would find in the *five* paper. We do not find a stylistic device such as the pivot sentence in the five sample that ties the entire piece together. The author knows what she is doing, certainly, but there is not the sense that she is completely in control of the direction her writing takes. One of the most powerful sentences in the piece, "Snoopy was often an escape from all the bad things such as my arguing parents, my mean older brother, or the boogie man under my bed," points out the underlying significance of the toy in her childhood. After this one spell-binding sentence, though, the development stops as the writer draws her piece to a conclusion. We certainly have a feeling that this writer is perhaps just one draft away from true excellence in ideas and content.

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Writing Sample 8-A-I-3

When I was growing up my favorite place was a beautiful park across the street from my red bricked house. I lived in the country so it was natural for the air to be clean and fresh. There were birds chirping and ducks quacking and playing in a clear pond as if they were always cheerful.

Our park was so neat and clean there was no litter. Everyone made sure the waste was picked up.

What really stands out in my mind about the park was the blue and red swings. They were the first place I wanted to play on. My brother would rock back and fourth on the toy horses which were yellow and reddish orange.

The park is still across the street from my old house but it has not at all been taken care of, there are no more blue birds, ducks, fish, or rabbits. The park has trash all over and no one even seems to care.

The *three* paper in ideas and content is a clear example of that paper right in the middle, with an equal amount of strength and weakness in this trait. For instance, the manner in which the writer describes her childhood perceptions is strong. We can clearly sense her nostalgia for the park where there were "birds chirping and ducks quacking and playing in a clear pond as if they were always cheerful." However, we wonder about why the writer chose to include a detail such as "the toy horses... were yellow and reddish orange." Why is this information needed? Further, the author does attempt to draw some conclusions about the deterioration of the park, but she has trouble when it comes to applying these general observations to her own life. Why was the deterioration of the park such a disappointment to her? This would certainly be one area where she could add more information to "fill in the blanks," as the rubric suggests.

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My children is a smart boy, to me. He like anykinds of toy. his favorite toy is a big eyes. big foots green flag. I don't remember what is that big flag call, but the flag is my favorite toy to! It may me feel go back to a childer again.

In I was young. large of girls take the cloth of flag symbol. That was a few years ago.

When I was goto United State to live. I was think it couldn't sald or come in the United State. but I was rough. it gave the happy to the childerds. and me, so the big flag will be favorite toy in the world and it always.

In the *two* paper, we expect to find the weaknesses overshadowing the strengths. This is true of the ideas and content in this example. A key phrase from the rubric for the score of *one* on ideas and content, "To extract meaning from the text, the reader must make inferences based on sketchy details" would apply to this piece. While it is true that we are hard-pressed to "extract meaning" from this piece, we cannot truly say that this is because of sketchy details. Indeed, the details are numerous; we simply cannot understand what they mean. Thus, we know that the flag takes him back to his childhood, that his children also like the flag, and that he was afraid he would not be allowed to bring this object with him into the United States. It is this wealth of detail that, while confusing, still keeps this piece from quite falling into the *one* category. All the information we need is here; the writer simply has not found a way to make it clear to us yet.

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My Toy

When I was about six years old my favorate toy was my monster truck. I had them scatred all ouer the house. It it al started when I got one for chrismas from my mother and I liked it alot. So I asked my mom if I could

This example of a *one* paper in ideas and content can be described very well by two of the bullets under the *one* descriptor, "Information is very limited" and "the writer may still be in search of... a sense of direction to guide development." Initially, this paper shows some promise. We know that the child loved his monster truck, and that he "had them scatered all over the house." We know that he received his first monster truck as a Christmas gift. Then the paper just stops, mid-sentence. If this is the result of a two-day attempt to address the topic, then we know that the student has serious problems in developing ideas. Even if the response was written in one 35 - minute session the student still has great difficulty in committing his ideas to writing. At any rate, this student's teacher would know that he needs to work on generating ideas with this student. Pre-writing activities might be helpful for this student.

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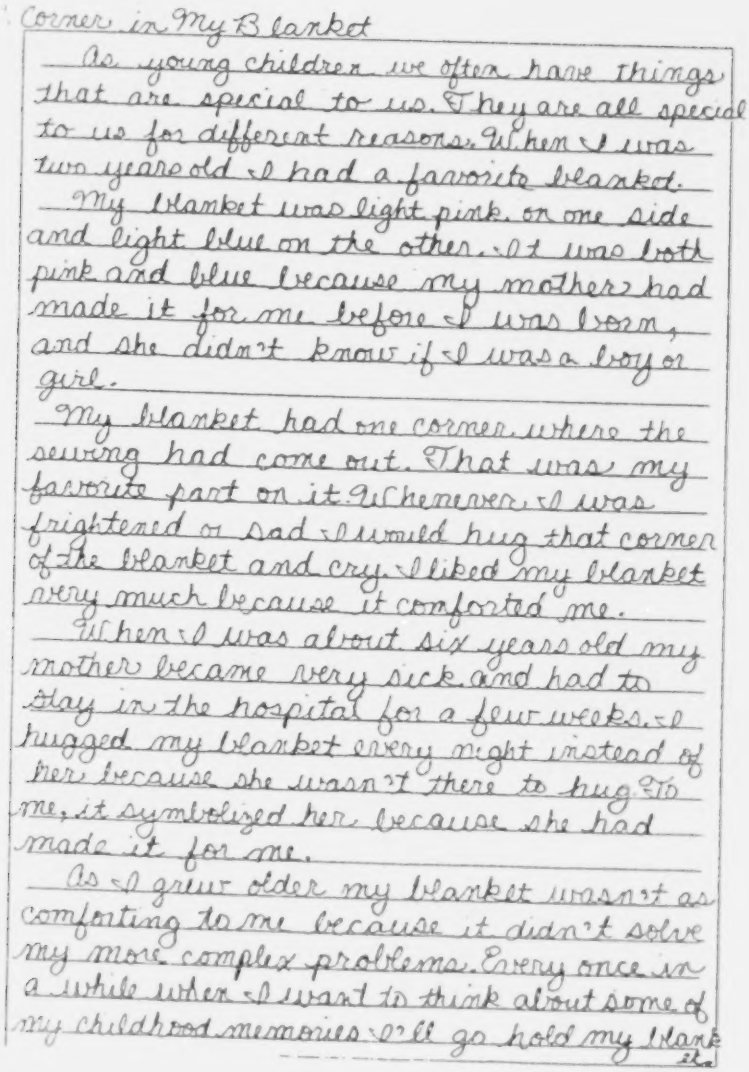

Corner in My Blanket

As young children we often have things that are special to us. They are all special to us for different reasons. When I was two years old I had a favorite blanket.

My blanket was light pink on one side and light blue on the other. It was both pink and blue because my mother had made it for me before I was born, and she didn't know if I was a boy or girl.

My blanket had one corner where the sewing had come out. That was my favorite part on it. Whenever I was frightened or sad I would hug that corner of the blanket and cry. I liked my blanket very much because it comforted me.

When I was about six years old my mother became very sick and had to stay in the hospital for a few weeks. I hugged my blanket every night instead of her because she wasn't there to hug. To me, it symbolized her because she had made it for me.

As I grew older my blanket wasn't as comforting to me because it didn't solve my more complex problems. Every once in a while when I want to think about some of my childhood memories I'll go hold my blank

This paper is an extremely well-organized response. Indeed, the fifth bullet under the *five* score could have been written precisely for this piece of writing, "Organization flows so smoothly the reader hardly thinks about it." Yet, when we look closely at this piece, we can see how truly masterful the organization is here. The introduction guides us smoothly into the piece; we move from the generality that all children have items that are special to them to a description of the specific object that was special to this author, a blanket. What follows at this point is a two paragraph description of the blanket itself, with just enough detail to help us envision it. Then, the author proceeds to the next level: the small crisis of childhood that showed just how important the blanket was. This, in literary terms, is the climax of the story. The, as every well-constructed story should, the piece moves to the denouement, the tying up of loose ends in the final paragraph, the nostalgic look back to the object that had somehow lost the almost magical powers it had possessed in the eyes of a child. The story is complete.

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Writing Sample 8-A-O-4

When I was younger I had a favorite toy. This toy let my imagination take exciting adventures to far off castles, the moon, gigantic mountains and so on. This toy was my teddy bear Joey. I know a lot of kids had teddy bears, but none like mine. Mine had a personality of its own. With a button in place of his left eye, a torn off nose, and a ripped ear from fighting with the dog; this bear had a certain style that he carried with him Every night when my parents turned out the lights I got scared, but Joey was always there to protect me. He me feel a sense of security. He's important to me because he was there to comfort me when I started crying or got a scraped knee from falling off my bike. Even now when I feel sad or depressed Joey waits for me to get him out of my closet, so he can still comfort me. I guess some things in life you can always count on.

The *four* example in organization still gives us a definite feeling of purpose and direction when we read it, yet the overall organization is not as powerful as we found in the *five* piece. For instance, the author identifies her topic clearly at the beginning, but there is no attempt to go from a generalization to specifics as we found in the *five* example. Rather, the author plunges us immediately into the topic, "When I was younger I had a favorite toy." Next, the author talks about the power of a child's imagination, "This toy let my imagination take exciting adventure to far off castles, the moon, gigantic mountains, and so on." This seems to be taking us in an intriguing direction, but in the next sentence the author drops this idea and instead gives a physical description of the bear. Granted, none of this is terribly obvious or bothersome, but it does suggest a slightly less developed control of organization than we found in the *five* example. As in the *five* example, the author does conclude with some overall observations about how her feelings toward Joey have changed over the years, but the structure of the piece is just not quite as tight as we found in our previous example. This author may be one draft away from finding the key to organization that will allow her to produce a structurally satisfying piece of writing.

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Writing Sample 8-A-O-3

When I was young I had a favorite toy that gave me something to do when I was board. On Christmas eighty six, I got a toy that was called Voltron. It was a robot that broke off into five lions: two were legs, two were arms, and the leader was the body. That week I constently played with it, while playing with Voltron my brother saw him. So I showed him how to put Voltron together and apart, I felt a bond with my brother.

As the years past I started to lose intrest in Voltron. I desieded to put him away in a box and stuff him in the closet. When I got board I would take them out of the box and play with them. I noticed that parts were breaking off and parts started to disapear. So I put the old thing away for good. After Voltron was gone and forgotten I put all my intrest into viedo games.

The *three* example of the trait of organization demonstrates the main phrase from the rubric, "The organizational structure is strong enough to move the reader from point to point without undue confusion." The organization while not particularly compelling, does not confuse us in any serious way. The introduction and the conclusion are enough to guide us in and out of the piece fairly easily, yet there is no "strong sense of anticipation" created by the introduction nor any "satisfying sense of resolution" to be drawn from the conclusion. From the introduction, we know only that the toy gave him "something to do when [he] was board." In conclusion, we learn that Voltron was eventually replaced by video games; but rather that wrapping up what he has already talked about, the final sentence seems to lead us into another topic. This is definitely not a "satisfying" conclusion. The sequencing of the middle parts of the piece is usually logical, but sometimes the author will take off in a direction that is never fully developed, such as the portion of the essay where he talks about how playing with Voltron helped him create a bond with his brother. As the rubric states, "despite a few problems, the organization does not seriously get in the way of the main point." The strengths and weaknesses in organization balance each other at the *three* level.

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Writing Sample 8-A-O-2

My favorite place is Disney land. It has alot of rides and arcade games. The best things were the food and gift shops. Splash mountain and space mountain are the best rides in the park. The rest were alright but not as good as I thought it would. There is one good thing about Disney land was when they had the fireworks and the shows. But the rest of the stuff there was not that good. I won some stuffed animals at the games were now try to mock over some bottles. The best food there was the pizza and the chicken That was one of my good days. The End!

The *two* in organization should find us somewhere between the lack of "undue confusion" characteristic of the *three* and the stringing together of ideas in a "random, haphazard manner" that we would expect of find in a *one* paper. This author seems to fit into that "emerging" category we find described on the continuum. Rather than giving us a completely haphazard listing of the joys of Disneyland, the author does make a slight attempt at development. We know, for instance that Splash Mountain and Space Mountain "are the best rides in the park." Rather than dropping this and going immediately to another aspect of Disneyland, the writer continues to discuss the other rides, "The rest were alright but not as good as I thought it would." In other instances in the paper, though, there is a tendency toward random listing, and a feeling of confusion develops as the author hops from one topic to the next. Food and gift shops are mentioned briefly at the beginning and then food again toward the end of the piece. This student needs assistance in finding a pattern to organize his ideas and group them together to insure an organized piece of writing.

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Writing Sample 8-A-O-1

My favorite toy was Heman I loved heman and still do I liked how he take out his sword and say "I Have the Power" and I liked how he put power on his tiger cat Cricher but when he get power his name is "Battle Cat" And I had a favorite place was "Chucky Cheese" I lick the rides and I like when Chucky Cheese come out and play with the kids

This writer is in the "beginning" stages in terms of organization. His writing contains very little sense of direction, and what was there at the beginning of the paper has disappeared completely before the end. At the beginning we are hopeful for this writer, as he starts out by discussing his favorite toy, "Heman." He continues to discuss Heman for a few sentences, not in any real satisfying way, but with enough direction to stay "on topic." Suddenly, however, the entire organization of the piece falls apart in the second sentence where the author jumps to a different topic, his favorite place when he was a child. From "Heman" to "Chucky Cheese," we have little sense that this author has any control of organization at all. This student's teacher could begin by stressing that he needs to stay focused in his writing by dealing with only one topic at a time. It would also help this student to read the prompt more carefully, since it asked him to describe only one favorite childhood object, toy, or place.

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Writing Sample 8-A-V-5

In the distant fog of my memories, I remember my childhood. Suddenly, in my mind, I am five years old again. Sitting in the middle of my room, I admire my favorite toy. It looked back at me with it's Circus Clown face, smiling constantly. It was only a doll Clown, with a red mouth, button eyes, a ruffle around the neck, and a tall hat.

I pull the string, and like magic a bellowing electronic laugh bursts out, shattering the silence. It has always kept me company during bad times. During the raging thunderstorms, Or the threat of a monster inhabiting my closet. Or times when I'm just feeling sad or lonely, I crawl under my bed with my clown and pull the string over and over. And in a short matter of time, the laughing doll will have chased my fears away.

I reflect, and my solemn face cracks a white smile. To this day, it sits in my quarters, still grinning I look at the doll, and I grin back. Because I will never, under any circumstances, forget what this childhood toy has done for me.

This example of a *five* in the trait of voice illustrates the main descriptor from the rubric, "The writer speaks directly to the reader in a way that is individualistic, expressive, and engaging." We hear the ring of conviction as this author takes us back to a time when he was five years old, "sitting in the middle of [his] room, ... admiring his favorite toy." We agree that this author "shows courage and confidence" in his willingness to share some of his more frightening childhood memories. Looking back from the perspective of an older child, these fears may now seem trivial and immature, but still, the author shares the truth with us. He's not afraid to tell that at times, when he was "feeling sad or lonely," he crawled under [his] bed with his clown, and pull[ed] the string over and over." He has recreated this powerful childhood memory in his mind and on this paper; we can truly say that we sense the person behind the words.

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Writing Sample 8-A-V-4 Red Elephant

As a young child I had more than one favorite object, but I will pick my red elephant as my topic.

I have had "red elephant" since I was really little. Probably since before I could run, walk or talk. That is the reason his name is: Red Elephant; because my parents called him that, and because I was too little to choose a name for him.

Red Elephant has big red ears with red and white checkered insides. He had two oval-shaped blue button eyes. I say had because he is missing one now... I used them like a chew toy when I was teething. His trunk a big red thing now flops to one side from being dragged and yanked around when I started running (my mom says that I skipped the "walking stage" and went right to the "running stage") At once new furry body is now an old knitted body from years of love and attention. My red elephant now rests some where in my closet waiting till I have my own children to be played with again.

I do not remember my younger years very much except for bits and pieces. All I know is that a once new and adored red elephant is now and old and loved red elephant memory.

This example of a *four* in voice shows a writer who is leaning strongly toward a *five*. This piece of writing goes far beyond the *three* descriptor of writing which "seems sincere, but not genuinely engaged, committed, or involved." This author is involved in her description of the Red Elephant. Perhaps what kept the two readers from bumping this paper up to a *five* is the hesitancy this author displays at the beginning of the piece. The introductory paragraph is weak as the writer tells us what she plans to do in her description rather than just proceeding to do it. This piece would be much stronger in voice if we could simply eliminate that opening paragraph. From that point onward, however, the voice in this description grows stronger and more powerful. We sense the author's attachment to the elephant as she describes its frayed and torn features, "He has two oval-shaped blue button eyes. I say had because he is missing one now... I used them like a chew toy when I was teething. His trunk a big red thing now flops to one side from being dragged and yanked around when I started running..." We smile with amusement when the author mentions that her mom "says [she] skipped the 'walking stage' and went right to the 'running stage.'" The voice of this author continues to reverberate right up through her final concluding sentence, "All I know is that once new and adored red elephant is now an old and loved red elephant memory." Again, the phrase "a draft away" fits the voice in this piece.

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Writing Sample 8-A-V-3

As a young child we all had a favorite toy, object or place. As for me, I had a soft blue, satin-lined blanky. I loved it so much, because I had slept with it every night since I was born, and it kept me warm. It make me feel comfortable and secure to be with it at all times. For about 3 more years I stayed with the blanket. I always loved my blanky because it was really the only thing I desired, and could physically manage. When my mom needed to change my diaper I would not let go of my pride and joy.

For some strange reason my blue blanky was washed about one time and was getting dirty, worn, and tattered. One day my mom just did away with it, but I never really noticed that it was gone, cause she had bought me a new one in replace of it. I will always remember my first joy, my blue, satin-lined blanky.

This paper was rated a *three* in voice. Although the readers saw it as "sincere," it did not go much beyond that. In terms of the rubric, this writing does seem to "hide as much of the writer as it reveals." While he recalls events that happened while he was still in diapers, we wonder if he is simply recounting something that was told to him. Voice is the trait where we deal with questions of authenticity. The author speaks in generalities, "it made me feel comfortable and secure to be with it at all times." It would be more powerful if he could have given any specific instance of comfort. The voice does, however, emerge in a few instances where the writer shows in sight and understanding as in the sentence where he writes about how he always loved his blanket "because it was the only thing I desired and could physically manage." This statement provides a fairly perceptive insight into the reality of a child's life. This author's voice is developing, as the continuum suggests, but it is not yet fully realized.

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Writing Sample 8-A-V-2

My favorite place is Seattle. Seattle looks like a rain forest in some places. In other places it looks like a big city. There is a lot of trees in Seattle. There is also a very neat ocean.

Seattle is important to me because when I grow up it will be the place that I live. It is also a nice place to take a vacation. Seattle is allso important to me because it has a lot of trees & nature, & it also has rain & I love the rain. Because of the rain Seattle smells good.

When I am in Seattle I feel very happy & free to do anything I want. To me Seattle seems peaceful & comforting.

For all these reasons I want to move there when I grow up. I love Seattle.

The author of the *two* example in voice tries to convey why he likes Seattle so much, but without a great deal of success in this particular trait. It is difficult to visualize him in Seattle, since he tells very little about his own experiences there. Instead, he simply lists the attributes of the city. We learn that "Seattle looks like a rain forest in some places" while in other places, "it looks like a big city." This is an interesting dichotomy, but the author fails to place himself in either the rain forest or the city. Likewise, we know that Seattle is important to him "because it has a lot of trees and nature," but we see virtually nothing of the author's own experiences in this place. The closest he comes to achieving authenticity in voice is in his sentence, "when I am in Seattle I feel very happy and free to do anything I want." If only the author would tell us about those happy times or moments of freedom. Some hint of voice is beginning to emerge here, but is not there yet.

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Writing Sample 8-A-V-1

The Rarked. the games are fun to play and the people are fun to take too and they are nainies and the food is good to eat at the Rarked and the Rarked are in the icacineos and the slias are fun to play and to viath wen people play it.

The author of this example of a *one* in voice obviously has problems in all areas of writing, not just in this trait. Because of the overwhelming difficulties we face in simply decoding this writing, it becomes virtually impossible to tell if there is much voice present here or not. It is apparent, though, that this author does not possess enough control of the writing process to involve his reader in his topic. Indeed, we cannot even decipher what it is that this student may be talking about. Before this writer can make progress in the area of voice, he must also make progress in other areas, especially ideas and content and conventions. Here we have an example of a writer who "does not seem to reach out to an audience or make use of voice to connect with that audience." Before he can do so, he must learn to communicate. This author has no voice because he lacks literacy.

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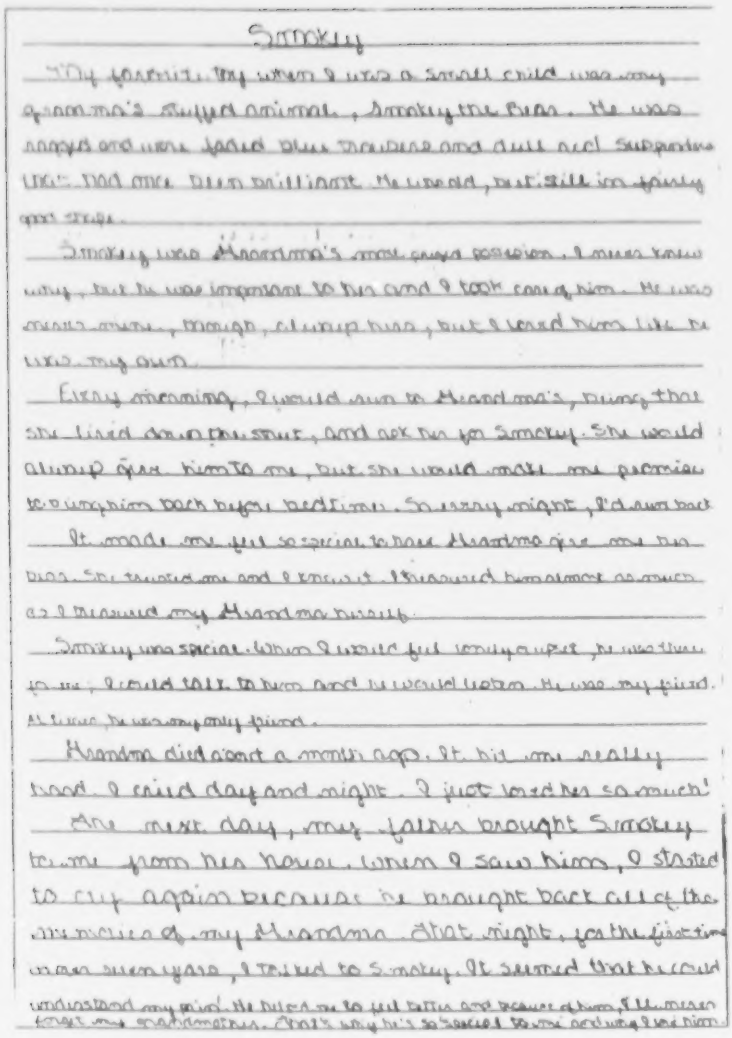
Writing Sample 8-A-C-5



Smokey

My favorite toy when I was a small child was my grandma's stuffed animal, Smokey the Bear. He was rough and worn looking but to me he was perfect. He was my best friend. He was brilliant. He listened, but still in grandma's arms.

Smokey was Grandma's most cherished possession. I never knew why, but he was important to her and I took care of him. He was never worn, though, always hugged, but I loved him like he was my own.

Every morning, I would run to Grandma's, hug that she lived down the street, and ask her for Smokey. She would always give him to me, but she would make me promise to snuggle back before bedtime. So every night, I'd own back.

It made me feel so special to have Grandma give me her bear. She trusted me and I knew I should treasure him almost as much as I treasured my Grandma herself.

Smokey was special. When I was feeling upset, he was there for me, I could talk to him and he would listen. He was my friend. At times, he was my only friend.

Grandma died about a month ago. It hit me really hard. I cried day and night. I just loved her so much!

The next day, my father brought Smokey to me from her house. When I saw him, I started to cry again because he brought back all of the memories of my Grandma. That night, for the first time in many years, I talked to Smokey. It seemed that he could understand my grief. He held me so that I could cry because of him. I'll always treasure my grandmother. That's why he's so special to me and why I love him.

The piece entitled "Smokey" is a wonderful example of a *five* in the trait of conventions. This writer "demonstrates a good grasp of standard writing conventions... and uses them effectively to enhance readability." Only "light editing would be required to polish the text for publication." A closer examination of this writing reveals just how masterfully this student handles conventions. She knows, for instance, that two independent clauses linked together by a coordinating conjunction require the use of a comma before the conjunction. She knows how to very sentence length and how to use a very short sentence for effect, "He was my friend. At times, he was my only friend." She knows the intricacies of using a semi-colon correctly, "When I would feel lonely or upset, he was there for me; I could talk to him and he would listen." This author knows the rules and she knows how to "manipulate conventions for stylistic effect," as the rubric suggests. Although there are a couple of very minor error in this writing, this author's use of conventions should make any English teacher proud!

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Writing Sample 8-A-C-4

"Mom CAN I have that stuffed dog," I asked as we walked through the toy section in the department store.

"Sure," she replied.

She picked it up and put it in to the shopping cart. The dog was brown with white spots on his back. The dog also had a red price tag on its long ears

I had many favorite toys, but my dog was my favorite I named him Bob Everywhere I went Bob was with me Like in my backyard, stores, parks, and even the dinnertable. Many people complimented me on my dog Bob, "nice dog kid", "you have a swell dog," and "your dog is very clean."

But after awhile my dog wasn't so clean anymore Bob started getting dusty and dirty, his spots of white were becoming a brownish color, both of his ear were almost disconnected from his head because I would hold him by his ears and swing him around, and stuffing was coming out of his stomach.

One day both of Bobs ears fell off, and he just wasn't the same dog anymore. My mom tried to sew his ears back on but they wouldn't stay. I then buried him in my backyard under a nice arrangement of rocks

The author of the *four* in conventions also shows control of a wide range of mechanical and grammatical matters, but not quite to the same degree as we found in the *five* example. This writer, for example, knows how to use quotation marks to punctuate dialogue, but she has not quite mastered avoiding sentence fragments, "like in my backyard, stores, parks and even the dinner table." Likewise, this author may know that whenever a different person speaks, it is necessary to begin a new paragraph, but she misses an obvious use of the possessive, as in "Bobs ears." The feeling that we have about the conventions in this piece is that the author is usually in control, but not always. Sometimes that control slips away, yet never to the extent that his grammatical errors impede understanding. A bit more than "light editing" might be required, but not much more. Because of this writer's overall ease with the use of writing conventions, we are free to enjoy the delightful story of Bob, the dirty, earless, yet adored stuffed animal.

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Writing Sample 8-A-C-3

When I was in the sixth grade, I wanted to play basket ball. I was not that good but, I still wanted to play.

So I practice hard, and passed the sixth grade. I tried out for the seventh grade team, I made the team, and became a Starter. Later that year we won the Sagebrush league.

I am in the eighth grade now, and I am trying out for the eighth grade team.

I think I will do better this year because I am not a begener.

The author of a *three* paper in conversions would be expected to show "reasonable control over a limited range of standard writing conventions." The range here is quite limited. For example, this writer does seem to have some basic understanding of the use of commas, yet he also creates several run-on sentences. Similarly, he understands the necessity for paragraphing, yet does not create fully developed or fleshed-out paragraphs. We should make it clear, however, that while the physical act of indenting paragraphs is a consideration in the scoring of conventions, the problem of lack of well-developed paragraphs falls more in the trait of organization. The author of this piece also has some fairly serious problems with spelling, but they are never serious enough to "distort meaning" Here we have an author who, with some further review of the rules of conventions, can probably produce a very readable piece of writing. At present, though, the piece does not seem to reflect "extensive or thorough editing." This student's teacher could help him by placing more emphasis on the editing phase of the writing process.

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Writing Sample 8-A-C-2

/My farite place is Disney Land.
I like Disney Land because it is a wnnderful place
to go for a vacation and you can have fun.
There are many rides you can enjoy having
fun on. Some of the names for the
rides are, Space Mountain, The Tea Cups, The GO
Cart Ride and Splash Mountain. There Food
is great you can ept Friedchicken, fish,
pizza, lambchops and you can have great
milk Shakes. You cand go to a island that
is called Sawyers Island it is acame because
you go over by boat and you can go in
caves and go on briges and lots of
thing you can go on. There are games
you can play like Shooting, and Bean Bag
toss and other games. Also there video
arcade and some of them cost a penny
they shaw old picturs. They have shaws
and they have one that tells us about
presedent Lincon and they have parades
with Foats and Singers.

Although the author of the *two* example in conventions commits enough errors to make this text "difficult to read," we cannot say that "the reader must read once to decode, than again for meaning." Meaning remains quite apparent throughout the piece even though the errors are frequent and serious. That quality of readability is what probably keeps this piece from slipping into the *one* range in conventions. Despite that, this author does not use some of the most basic conventions of writing, such as complete sentences. In at least three places the author runs compete sentences together without punctuating correctly between them, and in his closing sentence, he strings sentences together with and... and... and. In addition, there are overwhelming spelling and punctuation errors. Because at no time in his piece do we ever completely lost sight of meaning, this author can build upon that base of essential readability to improve his mechanics.

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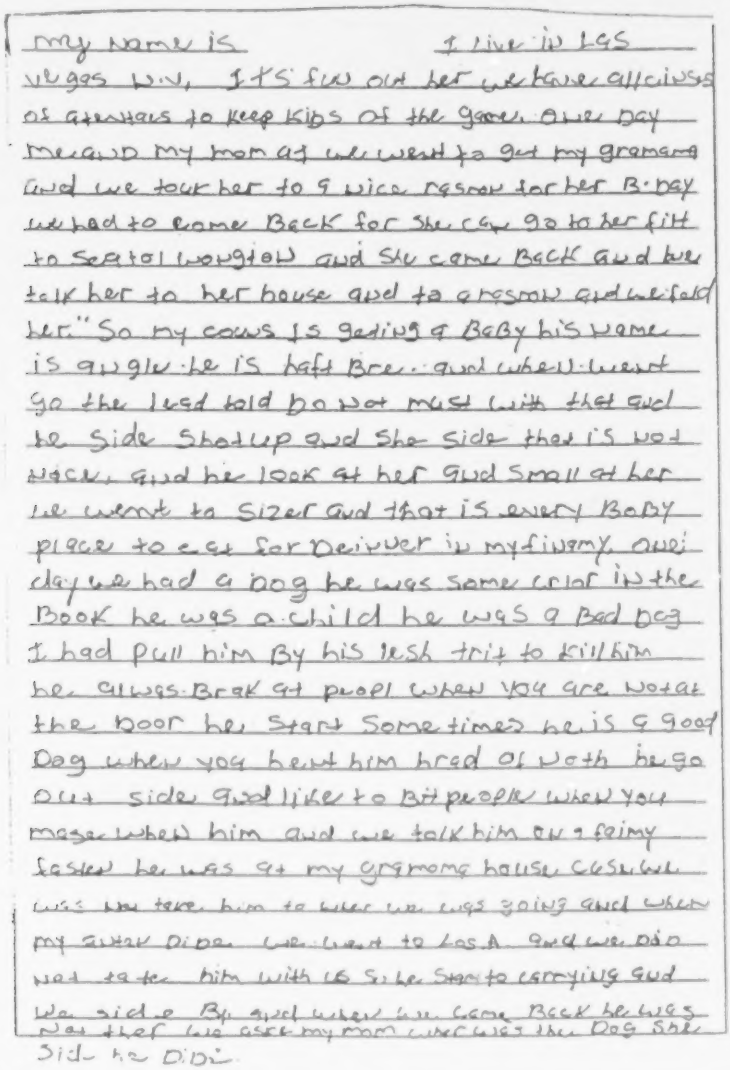
Writing Sample 8-A-C-1



my name is I live in LAS
vegas N.V, I'S fun out her we have officers
of streets to keep kids of the gases over day
me and my mom at we went to get my gramama
and we took her to a nice resaw for her B-day
we had to come Back for she can go to her fitt
to Seattol washton and she come Back and we
talk her to her house and to a resaw and we feld
her." So my cousis is seding a BeBy his name
is augie he is half Brea and when I went
go the lest told do not must with that and
be side Shot up and she side that is not
nice. and he look at her and small at her
we went to sizer and that is every BeBy
piece to eat for deiver in my fiamy. one
day we had a dog he was some color in the
Book he was a child he was a Bad dog
I had pull him By his lesh trit to kill him
he always Brak at peopl when you are Not at
the door he start Sometimes he is a good
Dog when you hent him bred of both he go
out side and like to Bit people when you
mase when him and we talk him on a faimy
fasion he was at my gramoms house closet
was we take him to wher we was going and when
my sister Dide we went to Las A and we did
not to te him with us side Start to carrying and
We side By and when we come Back he was
Not ther we ask my mom where was the Dog She
Sid he Did.

This paper, scored as a *one* in conventions, is a classic example of a piece that we "must read once to decode, then again for meaning." Furthermore, even the second reading does not always answer the questions that arise in our minds about just what it is that this author is talking. In this piece, the words are not even spelled in a phonetic way that could suggest meaning. For instance, we can decipher the first two sentences, but then when we reach the third sentence, we are lost because of the overwhelming seriousness of errors in spelling and punctuation. In the next sentence, we again see a flicker of meaning, but still we are not quite certain. We know that the writer and her mother pick up the grandmother and apparently go to dinner, but beyond that we cannot tell exactly what is going on. In a sense, this a very illustrative paper because it remind us that a *one* paper does not have to be short. In fact this author seems to have a definite idea in mind for this writing; it is unfortunate that readers are unable to understand what it might be. Perhaps one way to help this student would be to work on very short pieces at first.

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The "Topic 8-B" papers on the following pages were written in response to the following prompt:

Tell about an event that you did not want to attend, but that you had to attend anyway. What happened?"

Writing Sample 8-B-I-5

I was only seven years old when it happened, but I remember it like yesterday. I was in my first grade classroom when an office opened the door. She slowly staggered over to my teacher and whispered something in her ear. There were no smiles on their faces. The tired office clerk then took me by the hand and led me down the bright hallways to the office where my dad was waiting sullenly. His eyes were filled with tears, and I didn't ask him any questions, though I was dying of curiousity. When we got to the car, I was shocked to see that my mom was shaking violently. She didn't utter a word as a flood of salty tears poured from her eyes. I too, began to cry. As we drove, my vision became blurry and I fell asleep.

We had arrived at my grandmother's house when I woke up. I was tired and afraid and angry that no one had told me what was going on. I stepped into my grandmother's house to see that our whole family was there. Some were crying on each others' shoulders. Some were collapsed on the floor, unable to bear the pain. My mother ran to my grandmother and swung her lifeless arms around her. I heard a whisper, "She was too young. She can't be gone."

And at that moment I realized that not every one was there. My Aunt Patty was missing. I didn't feel like crying though. She was only nineteen and no one dies that young. My mom, who seemed to me like the strongest person in the world, seemed helpless. It was the worst moment of my whole life. And worst of all it was the day when I realized that my mom was not the strong person I thought she was.

This paper was scored a *five* in ideas and content. As the rubric suggest the story the writer has to tell is clear and focused, including many details that give the reader important information. The opening paragraph sets the scene for us, as the office clerk comes to the author's first grade classroom and brings her to the father who "was waiting sullenly." In the car, she "was shocked to see that [her] mom was shaking violently." This excellent use of detail establishes just the right tone of mystery and impending doom. The second paragraph builds upon this sense the child has of being left out of the adult's world: she was "tired and afraid and angry that no one had told [her] what was going on." Perhaps more shattering than the loss of a loved one, though, was the realization that her own mother is not always strong and in control. The death of this writer's aunt becomes more than just an occasion for sadness; it is one of those important learning moments when a child loses innocence. This is an author who "seems in control and develops the topic in an enlightening, entertaining way."

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Writing Sample 8-B-I-4

Scam-a-lot

Probably the stupidest thing I have ever been made to do is go to a movie. That's right, a movie! We were visiting my grandparents in California at the time, right before the start of another school year. To me, this trip represented Summer Break of '95. When this trip was over, so was my three months of freedom.

The day before, I had had the opportunity to go ocean fishing with my uncle and cousin. In the ten hours we spent out there, we boated, at a rough estimate, seventy-five mackeral, ten rock bass, and two barracuda. Because of motion sickness, I also did a little extra chumming over the side of the boat. So, when we planned a movie for the next day, I expected nothing but the best. What I got was a verbal kick in the rear.

The day after Mackeral Man here struck Marina Del Rey, we looked through the paper for a good theatre. I had recovered from my nausea by then, and the whole world had turned into Apollo 13. I argued long and hard to go to the Riverside 12 Theatre, but everybody else was for going to a mall theatre so we could shop after the show, which we never did. This theatre did not show Apollo 13, but I gave in, for health reasons, and decided to settle for Pocahontas. This worked until we got to the theatre and discovered that nobody, besides my little sister and me, wanted to see Pocahontas, and that we couldn't go because, as my mom put it, I "had" made Cori want to see Pocahontas." We ended up seeing A Kid in King Arthur's Court, the absolute stupidest movie I've ever seen! This show wouldn't have gotten good ratings from the producers of Barney! After this fiasco, I was almost glad to see the so-called "Summer Break" go down the drain.

The *four* paper is also clear, focused, and interesting, but lacks the overall power of the *five* example. The author, however, does manage to entertain us with his tale of "Mackerel Man." Perhaps the overriding difference between the two samples lies in the life lessons that the two authors gained from their experiences. The paper starts off strongly, with an entertaining account of the fishing trip. The problem here is that the fishing trip --- an event the author did want to attend --- is far more interesting that the account of the event he did not want to attend --- the movie. Therefore, the piece loses some of its impact near the end because of this sense of trivialization. We are left wondering why this student didn't find a way to focus solely on the fishing trip rather than the incident at the movies. If the author could shift his focus in this piece, we would feel more secure in the conclusion that "the writing has balance."

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Writing Sample 8-B-I-3

It all Started when my parents decided that we were going to go to Basslake for a week. I was so furious! because I didn't want to go! They said I had to go even though I could of Stayed with my friend Sarah.

It took five hours to get there. How boring! When we finally we were Suppose to meet my grandparents and my cousins at the registration desk but.. they weren't there So my Stepdad did know my grandpa had already made reservations So we didn't get two campsite next to eachother.!

A while later the Ranger came and we had to move after had already unpacked and got the trailer my grandparents brought in the lot. He didn't make us move because the people who were Suppose to get our Spot didn't Show up.

Well everyone got poison oak except for me and from there and on everybody was very rude except for me! When it was finally time to leave I couldn't wait to get out of that awful place! for ever!!!

The three paper in ideas and content is a good example of the middle range paper where strengths and weaknesses are nearly equal. Many details about the trip to Bass Lake are perfectly clear, such as the information about poison oak and what it did to everyone's outlook on the trip. Sometimes, though, development of ideas remains hazy, at best. For instance, in the third paragraph, the author first says that the Ranger made them move their campsite, but in the next sentence , he says they did not have to move. This kind of contradiction is very disconcerting for the reader. This piece is a "blend of the original and the predictable"; with a little more emphasis on the original ---the mix-up with registration, the bout with poison oak---and less emphasis on the predictable---the boredom of the trip, for instance---this author could have constructed a truly creative and entertaining piece of writing.

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Writing Sample 8-B-I-2

My name is ____. I go to alot of parties. I recently went to the Italin fest at the Rio. It was me, my sister and father but it was boring because I had just gotten back from a barbecue at Sunset park so I wasn't hungry. So it became boring because it was all about food and plus I had to watch my sister. As the music got louder the sky got darker and my sister got more annoying every hour. Final it was almost time to leave but my sister wanted to do the chicken dance but I didn't want to. But my father made go up on Stage and do the dance. But this all was just four days a go.

This *two* paper in ideas and content demonstrates extremely sketchy development of ideas. We get the notion that this author did not want to attend the Italian Fest at the Rio, but the problem occurs when he begins to explain this reluctance. We understand that the food at the festival was not particularly appealing because he had just been to a barbecue, but what, precisely, did his sister do that was so annoying? Details like this, and maybe an explanation of the Chicken Dance that hold promise for another draft of this paper. The paper leaves the reader feeling frustrated, because so many questions that it poses are left unanswered.

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This grupe of people.
I was in this grupe the rong grupe me and my best friend got in this grupe of people. This was when I lived in Vernal, will any way the people in this grup did not like my bestfriend and thay whanted her out so thay beat her up I stade in the grupe thay got me doing a lot of rong thinss. I was the only on in the grup that was not a Indian. I was in this grupe for a year and a hafe. I got out be for I did any thing really bad but thay did a lot of bad stuff. when I got out will the reason I got out is becouse I moved here will Elko W.V. with my ant. I am glad I moved hele and got out be for I did something really bad.
The End!

It is true of this *one* paper in ideas and content that "the reader must make inferences based on sketchy details." This student's involvement with the "the rong grupe" is clear to us, but the nature of the involvement and the seriousness of the acts committed while she was part of the group are never quite clear to the reader. We do know that "they beat her [the author's best friend] up, but when it comes to revealing the extent of the author's personal involvement, details are "sketchy" since she indicates she left before "a lot of bad stuff" happened. Even though this writer is in the beginning stages as a writer, we <u>can</u> follow her thinking. Her teacher could help her by showing how to add detail to her writing.

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Writing Sample 8-B-O-5

An event that I would have not liked to attend but had to was my families annual Easter family reunion. I do like to talk with my family members from out of town and my local aunts, uncles, cousins, and grandparents, but I see them often enough. Besides the fact that I see my relatives on a regular basis is the fact that since I'm the eldest child at the house I have the unavoidable responsibility of being the babysitter that watches ten or more monsters of children without complaint. It was absolutely horrible. My brother just sat on the couch gawking mindlessly at the television while I was refereeing who got to be the car on Monopoly. The rugrats standed on the leather furniture and jumped up and down while screaming and yelling like they were being whipped. Then, as the mongrels spotted my outraged grandmother they all piled on the couch, quiet as can be. They looked like children from the Brady Bunch, and I was left to do the explaining on why it sounded like a nut-house in there. Dinner time was even more chaotic. No one eats lunch so by 7:00 we are all starved. As I look at the food on the long table in disgust, everyone grabs a plate and waits in line. It looked exactly like a buffet only without good food and a sneeze guard. I stare at the food trying to decide on what I can stomach. My grandmother is from Russia so she made all of this gross Russian heritage foods such as halupki - stuffed cabbage, borsh - a beet soup, and this sickening tomato soup that I despise that is served ice cold. I grab a couple of potato-filled pasta and cautiously walk back to the living room not knowing what to expect. I should have known. Food was everywhere, spilled juice stained the carpet and the children were messy. I laughed as I cleaned it up thinking how a bunch of five-year-olds could cause this much trouble.

The organization of this paper "enhances and showcases the central idea or theme." The introduction sets up the situation, the family reunion, and the author's particular role on this occasion, babysitting the younger children. The pacing of the paper is well-controlled as the author describes for us numerous incident that illustrate just what a pain those children (or "monsters" as he terms them) can be. From "refereeing who got to be the car in Monopoly" to trying to keep the "rugrats" under control as they stood "on the leather furniture and jumped up and down," the author does seem to deliver needed information at just the right moment." The only place where the organization may break down even momentarily is in the section of the paper about the buffet. There, rather than focusing on the children, the writer shifts to a discussion of the "gross Russian heritage food." However, rather than losing control of organization at this point, the author ties it all back together again with description of what the children have done with the food. In fact, the writer uses the food incident as a way to end his piece as he wonders "how a bunch of five-year-olds could cause this much trouble." The piece feels complete at this moment; the organization is "compelling and moves the reader through the text."

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Writing Sample 8-B-O-4

Near the end of Summer Break, my mom asked me if I wanted to join the tumbling group at my new school. I said yes. I figured it would be easy since I was in Gymnastics when I was younger. When the time came around for auditions I was then picked so I signed up on the tumbling team. The tumbling team was a group of tumblers who performed at different schools during assemblys. I knew it was going to be fun.

When we had our first practice with all the tumblers after school I was very depressed. It seemed like everybody new how to do some thing spectacular except me. All I new how to do was a front roll although it was very athletic. After the second practice I cried to mom on the way home complaining I was going to quit. She told me no way and to keep going to practice. So every Wednesday after school I practiced. I hated it I hated the humiliation and the jealousy I had against the other tumblers. Although I had as much hate, I kept going to practice.

After about 2 months the hate was gone. I was a good tumbler. Through the rest of the year I had a great time. I'd always tried to forget how I started. Although, I always come to a great thought I'll never again love Tumbling Tight

Although the organization of the piece may be short of compelling, it is nevertheless, very good. This student moves us from a description of his initial humiliation at the first tumbling practice to a depiction of how his skills increase with more preparation over the next few months. There are, however, occasional breakdowns in organization here. For instance, when the author remarks, "All I new how to do was a front roll, although I was very athletic," we find ourselves in need of more detail or explanation. In what sense was he "very athletic?" The last two sentences also seem to offer a less than satisfying conclusion, perhaps because the meaning of the sentences is not entirely clear. However, it was the conclusion of the two readers that these problems were not serious enough to merit the lower rating of *three* on organization. This writer has certainly organized his piece in such a way that his emotional passage from depression to frustration to ultimate enjoyment of his tumbling group is quite evident to his reader.

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Writing Sample 8-B-O-3

One time I was at my friends house and it was the day she went to church. Her dad was really mean and he made me go with them. It was really wierd and I wished that I could leave.

When we got there they started asking people for money, for donations. Then they gave each person a cracker and said to eat it. Later, when it was over, they poured water on themselves. When we left I felt like I had done something wrong.

That was one of the most awful days ever, that I could remeber. Now that I have my own religion, I like it way better.

The organization of this paper was given a *three*. The reader moves "from point to point without undue confusion," but some problems do exist. The organization is usually perfectly satisfactory, but there are places in the essay where the reader is left with many unanswered questions. For instance, what particular qualities made her friend's dad "really mean," and why did the writer feel she "had done something wrong" as she left the church? This is an intriguing idea, and yet the writer pursues it no further. In these places, pacing could definitely be more satisfactory; the phrase from the rubric that suggests that "the writer sometimes spurt ahead too quickly" seems very applicable. Furthermore, the writer's conclusion that "now that I have my own religion, I like it way better" again creates a sense of incompleteness. We are left wondering why. That "satisfying sense of resolution" mentioned in the rubric is missing in this piece.

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Writing Sample 8-B-O-2

I don't like going to the cementary. My mother make me go because we have alot of people died in our family. When we go to the cementary we have to clean graves. It's always hot and it takes along time to clean the graves. We have about ten graves to clean and put flowers on. There is alot of weeds on the graves so the graves are hard to clean. The weeds are very strong too. We usually stay at the cementary from about 1pm to 6pm. Snakes are always moving around. This is why I don't like going to the cementary.

This *two* paper in organization offers a stronger level of organization than events merely "strung together in a random, haphazard fashion," as the descriptor of a *one* score from the rubric suggests. However, the descriptor from the *three* score that the organizational structure is "strong enough to move the reader from point to point without undue confusion" does not seem to apply either. Rather the organization seems to fall at the midpoint, thus explaining the *two* score. The paper has no specifically recognizable introduction. Instead, the writer drops us right into the middle of his topic, "the cementary." Once there, though, he does provide a fairly well-organized list of the things he hates about this place: the heat, the weeks, and the snakes, but we could benefit from some further discussion. What kinds of snakes? How many? Isn't this dangerous? Pacing at this point definitely "feels awkward." Finally, the one sentence conclusion seems to not do much in terms of tying the previous text together. The reader has a lingering feeling that perhaps the real reason the writer dislikes going to the cemetery so much, his fear of what the place represents, has not even been mentioned in this paper.

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Writing Sample 8-B-O-1

When i went to mexico i didnt want to go but they made me go because nobudy was going to stay with me and when we got to mexico we went to my dads house and we had to work for six month and on sundy we had to go to churc it was in downtown the only thing I lik was whe the they had partys.

This *one* paper in organization illustrates the statement from the rubric that "the writing lacks a clear sense of direction." There is no real lead, although we are able to conclude that this student "didn't want to go" to Mexico. There is very little control of sequencing in this piece. We know that they went to his dad's house where they stayed for six month and attended a church that was located downtown. To use the description from the rubric, "transitions are not clearly defined." This writer goes from one idea to the next without providing the necessary glue to hold all his ideas together. The end result is a mixture of ideas with no clear connection between them. We are nearly as unclear about why this student didn't want to go to Mexico at the end as we were at the beginning. This student might benefit from learning to slow down and take one idea at a time thoroughly before moving on to the next.

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It was October 1, 1991, I was supposed to be sleeping but that was a task easier said than done. In a couple hours I would be going to St. George to get braces put on. The horror and anxiety of becoming a "braceface" was to much for me to handle. I could just imagine myself sitting in that dreadful black chair being swallowed up by its stuffiness. I would be sitting there nervously rubbing my sweaty palms together and an ugly man with gray whiskers coming out of his ears would shout, "Open wide." It wouldn't be a nice and jolly remark, it would be a rude and grotesque belch. I would try to run from this morbid man but I can't, my legs are numb with fear. I don't want metal thing jammed into my mouth, I don't want colorful rubberbands, I want to get out of that office, but I am forced to sit and go through that excruciating pain. That was why I didn't want to sleep.

The next morning I went to get my braces on, fortunately for me reality wasn't as mean and cold hearted as my imagination. Even though I did not have to go through all the pain and agony I thought I would, I still have to go through the embarrassment of being a "braceface".

In this *five* example of voice, the author speaks "directly to the reader in a way that is individualistic, expressive, and engaging." We have no trouble hearing the voice of "Braceface" as she describes the scene of torture she will soon be facing, "I don't want metal things jammed into my mouth, I don't want colorful rubberbands, I want to get out of that office, but I am forced to sit and go through that excruciating pain." Here is an author who knows how to play on that universal fear of dentistry. In the final paragraph of her piece, she brings her raging nighttime fears into the light of day. Here, the tone is again perfect for showing that reality was much less frightening than she imagined, but that she would "still have to go through the embarrassment of being a 'braceface.'" The reader feels "a strong sense of interaction with the writer" as she explores a common source of fear---the fear of the unknown.

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Writing Sample 8-B-V-4

It was during dinner that my mother told me we had to put my cat to sleep. She had arthritis down her spine and couldn't walk or sit up easily. All she could do was lie there like a stuffed animal. We were to put her to sleep the next day after I got out from school. I didn't want to but I knew I had to.

That night, I had a hard time sleeping because uncontrollable tears kept running down my puffy, red, face.

I awoke with a headache and with a pain in my chest. I knew this would be the last morning I'd have with my cat. I petted her for what seemed like only a minute, but was actually a whole hour. My mother told me it was time to go to school and I left my cat with a lump in my chest.

Later on that day, my mother picked me up from school. As I climbed in the car, I saw the cat carrier in the backseat. Then, as I saw those two little blue eyes staring out at me from the carrier, all the wonderful memories of me and my cat came rushing back to me. I remembered how she used to claw my feet when I was sleeping. She always would purr when she got a piece of turkey. The car came to an abrupt stop and all my cherished memories drifted away. The vet came out to greet us and as we walked into the brown building, he told us everything he was going to do. Then, after kissing and hugging my cat for the thousandth time, I watched my cat die with blurry eyes. I knew my cat had a place in heaven, and memories have a place in my heart.

This paper was scored as a *four* in voice. In other words, two readers felt that it was very good, if not quite excellent. It does, however, illustrate some of the traits of the *five* paper, especially the bullet which describes a *five* paper as "honest and written from the heart." We do not doubt the love of this author for her cat, "I petted her for what seemed like a minute, but was actually a whole hour. My mother told me it was time to go to school and I left my cat with a lump in my chest." Perhaps the readers felt that the piece was too maudlin, lacking the control of tone and voice that are the hallmarks of a *five* in voice; perhaps they felt that the concluding sentence trivialized the impact of the event somewhat; perhaps they disapproved of showing this level of concern for an animal, seeing it as immature and childish. Regardless, nobody can deny the basic power of the voice in this piece to speak to humans' often deep attachments to their animals.

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Writing Sample 8-B-V-3

I'd woke up early and when I looked at the date on my clock, I knew why. Today was the dance. I really didn't want to go, but I had to. I layed in bed a few minutes longer, but then I had to get up and face my doom. I quickly took a shower and blew dried my hair. I put on a cheerful Halloween sweatshirt, and my favorite pair of old, worn jeans. Then came the final step. I went outside and dyed my hair pink with spray in dye. If I wasn't going to feel good, at least I would look good. I trudged through the school day. I dreamed lunch would never come, but, of course, it did. As our teacher led our class to the gym, the rest of the class was bubbly and excited. I was depressed. Many people were in costume. I wasn't. I really wished the day was over. As I walked into the gym, the bright lights hurt my eyes. I squinted, and then looked around. The gym lights had been turned off, but hanging from the ceiling was a big silver ball that spun, sending bright white light throughout the room. Against one corner was a long table covered with an orange tablecloth and varities of food were spread all over it. Hanging from the lights were orange and black streamers and balloons in every color. On the dance floor, ghosts danced closely with vampires and goblins and witches held hands. The music was playing so loudly that you had to scream to be heard. I quickly found my friends by the food table and I walked over to them. We talked for a while and then a boy walked over and asked me to dance with him. I was so excited! Maybe this dance wouldn't be so bad after all!

This paper scored a *three* in voice, and it illustrates many of the characteristics of that score. For instance, we can see that "the writer seems sincere, but not genuinely engaged, committed, or involved." One of the bullets that applies particularly well to this piece is the one that says, "the writing hides as much of the writer as it reveals." We know, for instance, that she is dreading the dance that she must attend, "I didn't really want to go, but I had to." The problem here is that the author never reveals or explores what is causing this sense of dread. Rather than delving into these deeper issues, the author instead stays focused on surface details such as the appearance of the gym. Typical of a *three* score in voice, there are moments when "voice may emerge strongly, then retreat behind general, vague, tentative, or abstract language." Such a moment occurs late in the essay. "On the dance floor, ghosts danced closely and vampires and goblins and witches held hands." We are enchanted by the originality of the sentence; the only problem is that such moments are few and fleeting in this essay.

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Writing Sample 8-B-V-2

The Movie

It all started out by my mom saying "Your going to see the movie and thats it." When we got there I was the oldest kid there. The begining of the movie was slow. Until the fighten started. Then it started to get better, but like all things it came to an end. When They went to the island was the best part of the whole movie. Overs all the movie was boring. Power Rangers was the dumest movie of the 13 years I've been alive. My mom said she wouldn't make me see a movie I didn't want to see.

This paper, an example of a *two* paper in voice, provides the reader with just enough hint of a personality to intrigue slightly, but never really carries through on this potential. We learn, for instance, that the movie got a little better once "the fighen started." However, the author does not fan the spark of interest any further. "Then it started to get better, but like all things it came to an end." The author has avoided revealing anything of himself to his audience. The piece continues in the same vein throughout, producing an effect that is "short of compelling," but perhaps just a step above "lifeless," thus explaining the score of *two* for voice.

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Writing Sample 8-B-V-1

Something that I had to attend that I didn't wont to was shcool. Because I didn't know anybody. But when I got on the bus I know a little people but not that many. When I got to the shcool house I seen alot of face that I didn't know but I got to know everbody and I was not that bad after all.

Aside from other fairly basic problems, this piece of writing, a *one* example in voice, speaks in a manner that could definitely be described as "indifferent, uninvolved, or distanced." We know that this author did not want to attend school "because [she] didn't know anybody," but we learn little beyond this basic fact. We never find out why she didn't know anybody, nor do we discover how she "got to know everybody." Perhaps the best description of the problems with voice in this piece is found in the first bullet of the rubric, "The writing communicates on a functional level with no apparent attempt to move or involve the reader." This student's teacher could help by asking the student questions about her piece, such as, "Why was their experience so scary?" or "How did you go about making new friends?" By answering these questions, the author can begin to move beyond the beginning phase in the trait of voice.

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Writing Sample 8-B-C-5

From the age of 5, up to the age of 8, my dream was to grow my hair down to my wrist. I thought that if I did, then I could look like a princess out of a fairytale.

One morning, my dream was crushed when my mom woke me up and said, "It's time for a haircut." She made it sound like it was supposed to be fun or something! I jumped out of bed and screamed, "What!? Are you crazy!?" She looked at me as if she has never seen this side of me before!

She dragged me out of bed and tried to get my clothes on. I fought her with all my might, but it was no use. After numerous minutes, I gave up.

When we arrived at the barber, I stepped out of the car, took a deep breath and walked towards the building. With each step my heart pounded faster and faster. I couldn't believe I was letting this happen.

I walked up to the door, keeping my mom's hand, we went in. I climbed on to the chair. I kept my eyes shut through the whole process.

I could feel the lady snippin' away with her scissors. She tried to start conversations by asking dumb questions like, "Do you think this is how your barbie looks when you cut her hair?" I didn't answer so that she would feel uncomfortable and dumb.

When I heard the last snip, I opened my eyes and looked down. I crumbled on to the floor and picked up my hair. I said bye to it for the last time. I could feel a tear drop fall from my cheek. Then others chased the 1st one. But they all went away when my mom brought me ice cream.

In conclusion, I figured that I don't need long hair to look like a princess, but I don't need to look like a princess to look like me.

This example of a *five* in conventions illustrates that the writer has "a good grasp of standard writing conventions." One particularly strong point is this writer's use of a variety of sentence lengths and structures. She includes both short and long, simple and complex in the choices she makes when constructing sentences. She seems to know intuitively when a short sentence will be particularly effective. "So I gave up." Furthermore, this writer includes a good deal of dialogue in her piece, and she knows how to punctuate it correctly. Even when she uses a word in an incorrect form, as in the case of "snippin," such a dropping of the final "y" seems totally intentional and effective. As the rubric suggests, "Errors tend to be so few and minor the reader can easily skim right over them." Here is an author who can manipulate conventions for effect, which is very sophisticated talent for an eighth-grade writer.

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Writing Sample 8-B-C-4

When I was six I was faced with something I didn't want to do. It was something very big in life for a six year old, moving.

I didn't want to move. I was six going on seven and just starting grade school. I also had many freinds that I knew I would miss. But the thing that shocked me the most is that there would be no hockey. For a kid in a town like Princeton, Canada hockey was every thing.

I remember that night just like yesterday. There I was, in bed crying. I was thinking to myself about all the people I would miss.

When I went into town the next day I spent the whole saying good-bye to all my freinds. Each house I went to it made me a little more sad each time. I was like this because I knew this would be my last time seeing alot of them.

The next day I woke up. I was very tired. Knowing that I had a one thousand mile trip ahead of me. The trip was long and boring, but after three days I had made it. The town was called Elko, Nevada. I will remember those days forever.

Although the author of this example of a *four* in conventions demonstrated a control of many writing conventions, we start to see more errors than we did in the *five* paper. Sometimes these errors even border on the "somewhat distracting" that is a hallmark of the conventions in a *three* paper. An example of this would be the sentence fragment in the final paragraph, "Knowing that I had a one thousand mile trip ahead of me." A bit more that "light editing" would be required to polish this piece for publication, but not too much more. If this author can learn to recognize and correct fragments and to check spelling a bit more diligently, his small problems with conventions can easily be corrected.

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Writing Sample 8-B-C-3

On August 13, 1992. I was over my friends house. We were playing Super Nintendo. E-Zero to be exact. We got tiered of playing super we went outside and played football for about 2½-3 hours. Then we got bored there and went to Ride bikes with my brother.

We went to my brother's girlfriend's house, Tammie. My brother and Tammie left to go on a walk so me and my freind decided to talk to Tammie's sister Jesse.

At about 4:00 pm my brother, my friend, and I left to go to Dunkin' Donuts. When we got there my brother got us some Donut and we ate them.

At about 6:30 pm we left and we had to cross the steet and there were only one car In the street. I told my brother I can make it and he said "No you wont" I started to go when the car hit me. I went flying. I got up and looked at my brother and said "No I won't". Luckly no one was hurt.

Later

Although the conventions in this *three* paper are not strong, they are clearly the strongest aspect of this writing. This paper serves to illustrate the notion that an essay can be solid in one or more traits while demonstrating weakness in others. The errors we find in conventions are "numerous or serious enough to be somewhat distracting." However, the writer "also handles some conventions well," as "tiered" for "tired", "friend" for "friend" but also the correct use of the possessive on "Tommie's" and the almost-correctly punctuated use of dialogue. "Moderate editing" of conventions would be required prior to publishing.

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Writing Sample 8-B-C-2

It was Mermorial Day weekend and we were going camping: me, my dad, and my brother. So we loaded up and we where off. It was six o'clock in the morning when we finally left we had skiped Breakfast for being late so we where gone on a two hour drive. So we drove for thirty or more miles and then suddenly POP a tire blew up so we got out fixed it with a tire that came with the car and was off on our way again. So we finaly found a town around nine O'clock: where we got a tire and ate some food So we left agian the raido about now died out so there was no raido to listen to. Right about to exit to the camp ground the tire we bought blew so we put the other spare on and was on our way we finaly got there with out dieing from bordom and the camp ground now thats another story.

This example of a *two* paper in conventions contains serious errors that make the paper difficult to read, but it has some redeeming features that keep it in the *two* range. Spelling is certainly a consistent problem but the author does appear to understand most matters of punctuation, even using a colon correctly in the first sentence. The most serious problem seems to be in sentence structure. This author needs to learn to vary sentence structure so that fewer sentences begin with "so." For this student's teacher, this would probably involve pointing out the repetition to the student so he becomes aware of it.

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Writing Sample 8-B-C-1

Yesterday after I got home I had to goto the Shore store but I didn wont go. I went to stay home and watch T.V. but my mom make me go to the Shore Store and buy a peace of Shore and then we when home.

The author of this *one* paper in conventions commits many errors that "repeatedly distract the reader and make the text difficult to read." Although she has enough control of conventions that meaning remains relatively clear throughout the piece, the reader is still in the position of having to "read once to decode, then again for meaning." This is evident in the following sentence, "My mom make me go to the shore store and buy a peace of shore and then we when home." The writing problems faced by this author are so profound that it is hard to know where to begin, but one method might be to help this author work on constructing individual sentences before moving on to a longer piece of writing.

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Fourth Grade Sample Papers

The "Topic 4" papers on the following pages were written in response to the following prompt:
There are many amazing people, things, places, and events in our world. Tell a story about one of them.
Writing Sample 4-I-5 Sample 1

It was a jet black night on October 9, 1990.

I was in my room doing my homework. When all of a sudden I heard knocks, pounds, and screeching noises. I jumped under my bed. I finally got enough guts to get out from under my bed.

I started back up on my homework again then all of a sudden the power went out. Then I heard someone saying I'm coming to get you! I heard more knocks, more pounds, and more screeching noises.

Then I heard somebody running down the hallway. Then somebody started to pound my door down. I was crying and shaking.

I heard my mom say time to get up son and get ready for school.

It was just a dream.

The
n.
d

This paper was scored a *five* in ideas by two readers. The writer uses specific details, "jet black night on October 9, 1990", "knocks, pounds, and screeching noises," to effectively set the scene for a frightening incident. He builds suspense and develops the central story line in a way that holds the reader's attention with a good sense of how events unfold. His main ideas stand out and his details give important information and a sharing of insights that is interesting and entertaining. Although the ending is a predictable one, we are not sure that this fourth grader has enough experience to know this ending is not an original one and he seems in control of the topic from beginning to end.

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Writing Sample 4-I-5 Sample 2

We were ready. My parents rushed me to the Mayflower. When aboarded the Mayflower, we picked a bed and laid our blankets out on it. When our bed was made. We went on deck and waved good-bye. When the people were out of sight we went back down in our cozy little bed in the bottom of the ship. When it got dark we went to bed. In the daytime we would sit in a circle and talk about life in the new world. While the men would descuss how they were going to build their houses and how they would get food. This went on for apporimetly 3 months, until one day when we heard the Captain yell, "Land Ho!" We all packed our stuff and went on deck. It was so beautiful, there were trees, grass, and the animals ran free. It was trully amazing. When we got off the men began building our houses. Then we heard a noise. We all stopped. Then an Indian walked out. He said his name was Squanto and that he would help us through the winter. The next day the houses were up and the snow came. When a year past we had a feast. It lasted 3 days when it was over the Indians thanked us and left. Then Squanto left too. He knew the pilgrims didn't need him. When he left the pilgrims went about their chores.

This author uses a historical fiction genre to respond to the prompt. It was rated a *five* in ideas by both readers. She does a good job of using specific observations to develop the topic in an interesting and entertaining way. She makes connections and uses supporting, relevant events and details to move the reader through the story line in an interesting way. Here is a writer who is using learned information to address the prompt. While she doesn't specifically address the topic, "It was trully amazing," until about half-way through the paper, it comes at just the right moment to bring us back to our original focus.

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Poetery

Poetery is one of the great literatures that young childeren would get atached to a while they grow up. In the old days poetery was sometimes important because teenage kids in high-school or college boys used it to tell a high-school or college girls he likes her. Poetery is also famous on Valentine's Day yong people use to tell eachother sweet and beatiful poetery, sometimes it was for love or to like someone alot. When yong couple who got engaged by sweet and loving poetery. Thats why I think poetery is a amazing thing.

The piece entitled, "Poetry" was rated a *four* in ideas by both readers, undoubtedly because they found some bullets in both the *five* and the *three* descriptors to explain this writing. They felt the main ideas, with supporting, telling details stood out; however, they were not sure the details demonstrated in-depth understanding. And, while the topic was developed in an entertaining way, the development was perhaps still somewhat limited. The topic was a cut above simply showing promise and was therefore above a *three*, but not quite yet at a *five*.

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Writing Sample 4-I-4 Sample 4

John Glenn

John Glenn is an astronot that went up into space recently when he's seventy-seven years old! He didn't have to go but he wanted to. He didnt go to the moon or any planet any where he just went to orbit the earth.

John Glenn has been up in space before, just not when he was seventy-seven years old. He hasent been up there recently, but now he is.

He has two more people up in space with him right now. They have been up in space since October 20, 1998 & are still up there but there coming down soon.

The
End

"John Glenn" was rated a *four* in ideas by both scorers. This informational story give interesting, relevant details and provides important reader information about John Glenn's age and travel itinerary. However, development in places is still limited and repetitive. He does not go far enough in talking about the "two more people up in space with him." It is further than "beginning to define the topic" but more information is needed to "fill in the blanks."

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The man who eats bees and wasps!
November 15, 1998 a man on T.V. was eating live bees! He was leting bees from a hive go into his mouth. He said they were very good. After he ate some honey. Then he went to go eat some more bees. Then he said he was stuffed. So there is the man who eats bees. He also eats wasps! The man said he dosen't like the wasps, because he says they sting his tongue. So when he eats wasps he usually cuts the stinger off. So this is my story on the man who eats bees and wasps.

The story about the man who eats bees and wasps was rated a *three* in ideas by the teachers who read it. This piece is clear and focused and the topic is interesting; however, while it is easy to see where the writer is headed, more detailed information is needed. Support doesn't go far enough in clarifying what the TV show was all about and who the man was as well as why he was eating bees and wasps.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

My fear

2 years ago when I was in the Phillipines because it was my granpa's birthday my mast biggest fear happened because my grandpa was died. My mom and her friends said his spirit would come, and they left food so when he came he could take the food. All night I couldn't sleep. So I keot at looking at the stairs I thougt I saw him a lot of times but it wasn't him. Then finally I fell asleep in my mosquito net. And in the morning I wondered if he came that night. But soon I forgot about it and we came back here to Elko.

The story, "My fear" was rated a *three* in ideas. This piece of writing shows promise although development is still limited, sketchy and general. The writer is writing from personal experience, and at times the writing is explicit and personalized to show in-depth understanding as with the description of falling asleep in a mosquito net while looking up at the stars. At other times support doesn't go far enough in expanding the thoughts, for example, was he unable to sleep from grief or fear? Was the food gone in the morning? What made him forget about it? Additional drafts with coaching could make this piece more powerful.

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Writing Sample 4-1-2 Sample 7

Kenny A.

Kenny is amazing because he is very nice Kenny does not wont to hert anybody when he plays football so he makes up the rules and says "play with tow hand touch" and we lessen to him we play faer and lessen to the rules it's fun playing with him his relly nice and funny mostly all the boys in are class play's with him and some girls plays with him to. Me and my best freind Madison my name is Jamie I like my name I dont now way.

Football is very fun when your playing with Kenny. He's good at spelling test's and alot of other thang's in class we did a greenhouse and his grew very good mine did to but it stank so I tinfow it away I made a know one and it's at home. I dont now if it's growing but I dont now if it's growing but I dont now if Kenny's stank and if he had to throw it away but his grow very good it went in deferent derections.

Foot ball is fun for everybody if they liked it anay way it's fun wrighting about Kenny his relly cool and nice I have nown him for a long long time and it's fun nowing him his fun to play with him and nowing him is fun to football is hard to teach someone but easey to play when you now how to play football that's all I got to say.

The paper about "Kenny A" drifts back and forth between topics. At times, it is focused on Kenny A, but it also disconnects from that focus to the author's pleasure in his name, his greenhouse that "stank" and football being a fun sport. In the portions that attempt to develop the idea that Kenny A is amazing, the writer is defining the topic but is not there yet as indicated in the *three* descriptor of the rubric. However, no central theme emerges and the reader has a hard time sifting out what's critical as indicated in the *one* descriptor. Therefore, this piece was scored as a *two* in ideas.

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I was go to John apples sea park in ELKO.
I was on John apples sea park and I
play into lunch time went to the
stor to buy foot for lunch.
What I real like about it is that
you can go to the simwpool is close
to the John apples sea park so
then I can go to play with my sister
and my othe sister and my brother
too. Then you can go home and
sleep in bed for a long night.
Then you can go back to the John
apples sea park because it's fun.

The End

The story describing Johnny Appleseed Park was scored a *two* in ideas by the two readers. While the writer does seem to be writing from experience, the information is very limited. The writer is beginning to define the topic, but it reads like a collection of random thoughts. Support is attempted but the reader has a hard time sifting out what's critical. With so many indicators of both a *three* and a *one* paper, this paper falls into the *two* category.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

I like BaskerBall it PS a fun Sport.
((IT's my favorit SPORT TO)) I want TO Be
famesTo. i don't know what i want TO Be. I am
Smart i get a5 and B's I love dogs they are
CUTE. I like TO try new things. am glad I
was Born. The End

The sample that begins with "I like basketball" was judged as a *one* in ideas by both readers. The paper has no clear sense of purpose or central theme. It shifts from liking basketball, to wanting to be famous, to grades in school, to loving dogs, to liking to try new things, and then to being glad he was born. It reads like a random collection of thoughts with no central theme, with the reader having to try to sift out what's critical. The writer seems to still be in search of a real topic.

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Driving a Arasnd

There was a Ford and it was alwas drving amond and up hills and arsond sharpe cornucrs and down hills all ill day long for tw days the scant day They got stuck But they brogt shuvels and They got out and then they went home and turand the truk off and went in and lade down and went to sleep

The story, "Driving Around" received a *one* in ideas from each of the readers. It has no clear sense of purpose or central theme. Information is very limited or unclear and everything seems as important as everything else. There is a lack of direction to guide development and the reader is left wondering what was amazing or even important in the story.

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There is a log cabin in Sacramento my family goes to and by that cabin there is a large tree.

One cold night there was a thunder storm and lightning, there was a big flash of lightning it had struck the tree. We couldn't believe it the tree was on fire! It started to rain and hail for a while. After a while the fire was out. The tree was slit in half.

In a year or so we came back to the cabin but when we saw the tree it was full grown and had twisted.

The accident happened three years ago. It looks like a twister. So now my family calls the tree Twister tree.

It was amazing that a tree lived through the lighting and fire.

The story about the twister tree was scored a *five* in organization by two readers. The order of the story moves the reader through it effortlessly with details fitting where they're placed. Sequencing is logical and effective using chronological order as a framework, with the opening sentence establishing the setting and the ending of the story concluding with the topic sentence. Transitions, "after a while," "In a year or so…..," work effectively to move the piece into a cohesive whole.

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Writing Sample 4-O-5 Sample 12

HOW WE GOT CLOUDS,
~~The fight of~~ David and Goliath.

At the begining of time there was a warlock named Golieth that didn't pay attention very well and took over the Earth. He was bossy and mean to everybody there. God (who made the earth) kept on telling Golieth to stop bossing people around or something bad was going to happen to him. But of course he didn't pay attention. One day God sent down a man named David to fight Golieth. At first david went along with Golieth. That next week he got about a hundred of the men in the mines to cut down a tree. The hundred men walked over with the tree trunk and bursted the doors to Golieths castle down. David told everyone "to stay back, I'm going in by my self." David grabed his spear (that he made out of a limb from the tree) and ran up the huge staircase. He saw Golieth sitting on his foot stool. He hurled a rock at the warlocks back it hit Golieth and he turned around with a grunt. David then hurled the spear in Golieths direction. Golieth smacked it down with madness in his arm. As soon as David saw this, he ran as fast as he could down the staircase. When he got to the bottem he felt Golieth gettin closer. David turned right before the door and Golieth not payin attention slamed into the door. David took a knife and threw it fiercly in the air it fell down and hit Golieths eye, Golieth was dead!!! As soon as that happened Golieth turned into clouds, and that's how we got clouds

This is "ONLY" Fiction!!!!

Both scorers scored the legend of how we got clouds with a *five* in organization. The writer uses a recognizable and inviting introduction, "At the beginning of time…" and concludes with a satisfying, "… and that's how we got clouds." Pacing is well controlled and information is delivered at just the right moment and moves on. The order and the sequencing are effective and flow so evenly the reader hardly thinks about it.

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Writing Sample 4-O-4 Sample 13

Lizards are amazing. Lizards are amazing because they come in all shapes and sizes. Some lizards live in a hot climate and some lizards live in a cold climate. Most lizards have scales, but some like salamanders have slimey skin. The lizards that live in a hot climate mostly have scales. The lizards that live in a cold climate mostly have slimey skin. Lizards are amazing.

The informational story about lizards received a *four* in organization by each of the readers. While the paper has a recognizable introduction and conclusion, it is simply a repetition of the topic sentence. However, details do seem to fit where they're placed and facts are presented in a logical and effective manner. The writer uses a compare-contrast structure that works well in delivering information at the right moment. Although the organizational structure is strong enough to move the reader from point to point, it is not done with the sophistication of the *five* descriptor.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

WhALe

ONe SuMMer eveNING, JULie, A SMALL 10 YeAR OLD GirL WeNT FiSHING WiTh her FATher. JuST ThEN, She SAW A FIN SHOOT iN The Air. They LiVed OFF The COAST OF mexico. "LOOK, A WhALe" She Cried "YeS, buT SHE IS hurT," SAid The FATher "WhY," She aSKed "The hunTers GOT TO her." "CAN We helP her" "NO" JUST ThEN The WhAle FLiPed OVer AND The hARPOON THAT WAS in he bACK FLew OUT. "IT'S OUT, IT'S OUT." Cried julie AND They rode horie. but They Will NeVer FORGOT THAT WhALe.

The eND

The story "Whale" was given a *four* by both readers in the trait of organization. It begins with an inviting introduction, "One summer evening, Julie, a small 10 year old girl, went fishing with her father." It also ends with an agreeable conclusion, "They will never forget that whale." However, there are places in between, where the focus shifts awkwardly. For example, after a fin shoots in the air, the information about living off the coast of Mexico is inserted. And, the transition from the harpoon flying out and Julie crying, "It's out!" to "they rode home" is somewhat abrupt. The reader must make connections and inferences that the writer has not provided. Therefore, there are enough *five* and enough *three* descriptors for the readers to label this writing a *four*.

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When good Pets go Bad

People think that anamails that have ben treand will not acked up. But think agen even anamails that have ben treand can go bad. Like at Sea World when a Killer whale was doing a show and suddenlg the whale bit the womans leg. She was lucky that thag're where just blade and big teeth mark's. 1

Thag're was a man that was doing a trick by stiking his head in his pet Alligator mounth then snap! the Alligator has the man's head in it's moath. Thag're was a lot of blud. The guy that was helping him got a sake and stabed the Alligator with the sake. Even thoagh the Alligator was in pain it still did not let go. 2

Thair was a dog ceacher walking around the dog ceacher saw a dog looking at a little ~~girl~~ girl. The dog jumped the fence and ran strate at the ~~girl~~ girl and bit her on the leg and draged her. The oner came out, and saw her dog atacking a little girl. So the grandma came the dog turned around and arhet at her the girl was ok and so was the grandma.

The story about good pets going bad, has a strong enough organizational structure to move the reader from point to point without undue confusion. While there are three examples of pets "gone bad": the whale, the alligator and the dog, there is no attempt to transition from one example to the next. And, although the story has a recognizable introduction, the conclusion does not attempt to tie the piece into a cohesive whole. Despite these few problems, the organization does not seriously get in the way of the main point or storyline; therefore the readers scored this paper a *three* in organization.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

A Strange Man

I saw a man who has the strangest finger-nails. He lives in India and has the longest finger nails. He only has long finger nails on one hand though. His finger-nails are about one yard long. He has cramps in his hand because of all the weight. He also has to sleep with a bag on his hand. His finger-nails are black and hang down. To me they ~~look~~ would be a pain, but to him they are special and (and a pain) Well, I sure wouldn't want to have them, thats for sure.

The story entitled, "A Strange Man" was scored as a *three* in organization by both readers. While this paper has a recognizable introduction and conclusion, the introduction does not crate a strong sense of anticipation. The transitions are simple sentence structures, i.e., "He lives...," "He only has...", "He has...", and "He also has..." The organization of this story is adequate, but not exceptional. It fits most of the *three* descriptors.

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Part(1)

Once upon a time there was a worm at a lake called: Lake Michigan and the worm was siting on a rock.

All of a sudden a little boy took the worm and put it on his hook and lowered it in the water and he got eaten by the fish but the worm was still alive and thats because it was an alien.

Part(2)

So the alien took of his worm suit and walked around and saw someone coming so he hid behind a tree because he dosn't want anyone to see him because people will call the police will come to her house and her name was. Adrianna but the police didn't belive her.

Part(3)

And thats the story about the alien worm.

the end

The story about the alien worm gives all the appearance of being a well-organized piece of writing with its division between parts one, two and three. However, on closer examination after part one, the story becomes unfocused and hard to follow. Connections between ideas seem confusing or incomplete and the lack of organization makes it difficult for the reader to get a grip on the main point as the storyline shifts so dramatically. The readers, therefore, both gave this piece of writing a *two* in organization.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

William Shakespere

It was a rainy night on the 12 of June, a man called William and his wife were in their house working on a book called "Romio & Juliet". He loved to write, story's, poem's, and play's too. The books he wrote in Veitnam he burned because he met his destiny but then he had to leave them. But when day's passed he lived in spain! He liked to travel alot too. He once went to visit the Great Wall of China, oh he was also a good explorer he'd visit difrent lands. Oh he also can invent stuff like oh light bualbs, a little bit of magic, and some telophones! He also was a famous man too! He also did a little line he'd say alot "to be or not to be that is the question"? Well that is it!!!

The End

"William Shakespeare" was given a *two*, albeit a strong *two*, in organization by both scorers. It has a recognizable introduction and conclusion; however, the sequencing and details, when present, need work. Connections between ideas, even ignoring questionable facts and details, seem confusing or incomplete. While the organization does not get in the way of the main point that Shakespeare is a famous figure in history, the big, hard-to-follow leaps from point to point are difficult.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

It was a long night. I was playing nintendo. After school my mom told me to my homework, I got my pencil. I took I took it to the living room my took it away I took it back. I got a paper. My dogs name is kino. After I was done with my homework My mom was going to work but my uncle came from work to go we all ate eveo my dog my dog fell asleep. I took him out side I closed the door my uncle said we have thour and a half I saw a movie when the movie was over I read the bible. In the morning my dog wasn't there but will always remember him.

The End

The writing sample address "a long night" was graded a *one* by the scorers. The writing lacks a clear sense of direction. Ideas, details and events seem strung together in a random manner. The lead and conclusion are not connected, and the minor details are as important as the larger ones. The leaps from point to point in the story line are so difficult that connections between ideas is confusing and incomplete.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

A Summer at Hawaii

One hot summers eve me and my family went to Hawaii, it was so amazing that when we got their I axed my mom, "Mom are we going to stay the night here?" my mom said "yes we are sweetheart." I said, yippy!"

It was almost dark and I couldn't fall asleep and when they woke up I was still awake that I fell fast asleep because I was so tired.

When I woke up my family was gone.

I saw a Volcano standing right where I was. finally I was away from that dum Volcano

Their were a lot of palm trees ther.

Oh and btw the way my grandma just last week got merried to a guy named frank.

I haven't been their for a year

But maybey on christmas break I can go down their to see them. It was so much fun in Hawaii.

"A Summer in Hawaii" was scored a *one* in organization by both readers. While there is an attempt at chronological organization in this piece, the chronology becomes confusing almost immediately. Readers are left to wonder when the author and her family arrived in Hawaii and what might have prompted the family's disappearance on her awakening as the volcano arrived "standing right where I was." The detail about her grandmother's wedding further convolutes the organizational problems. Connections between ideas are confusing and incomplete.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Francis Scott Key!

Francis Scott Key wrote the Star Spangled Banner during the Civil War. He wrote it after he got shot. He wrote this wonderful song because, whenever he looked up our flag was still there. It was a very hard time for Francis Scott Key at that time. Francis Scott Key got shot in the leg. Although it was true every time he looked up our flag was still there. The song Star Spangled Banner is very long. It is three verses long! The song Star Spangled Banner is usually played right before an event. For example it is played at Truck Rallys, Nascar Racing, Monster Truck Racing, Walk-a-thons, and especially 4th of July. Francis Scott Key sadly passed away. Francis Scott Key was a wonderful man. If Francis Scott Key was still alive and I knew him, on Veterins Day I would gladly say thank-you for fighting for our freedom. I would also give a nice beatiful present, and shake his hand. I would also get his autograph. If he had kids I would gladly play with them. If I were old enough I would babysit them for free. I would not make him pay me because, I feel he has already paid me by fighting for our freedom. Thank-you so very much Francis for saving us. The End

The two readers of this paper determined that the "Francis Scott Key!" is a *five* in voice. The ring of conviction in, "It is three verses long!" as well as all the interaction the reader dreamed about if Francis Scott Key were alive today gave the piece its individualistic, expressive, and engaging voice. They felt a strong sense of interaction with the writer and the person behind the words.

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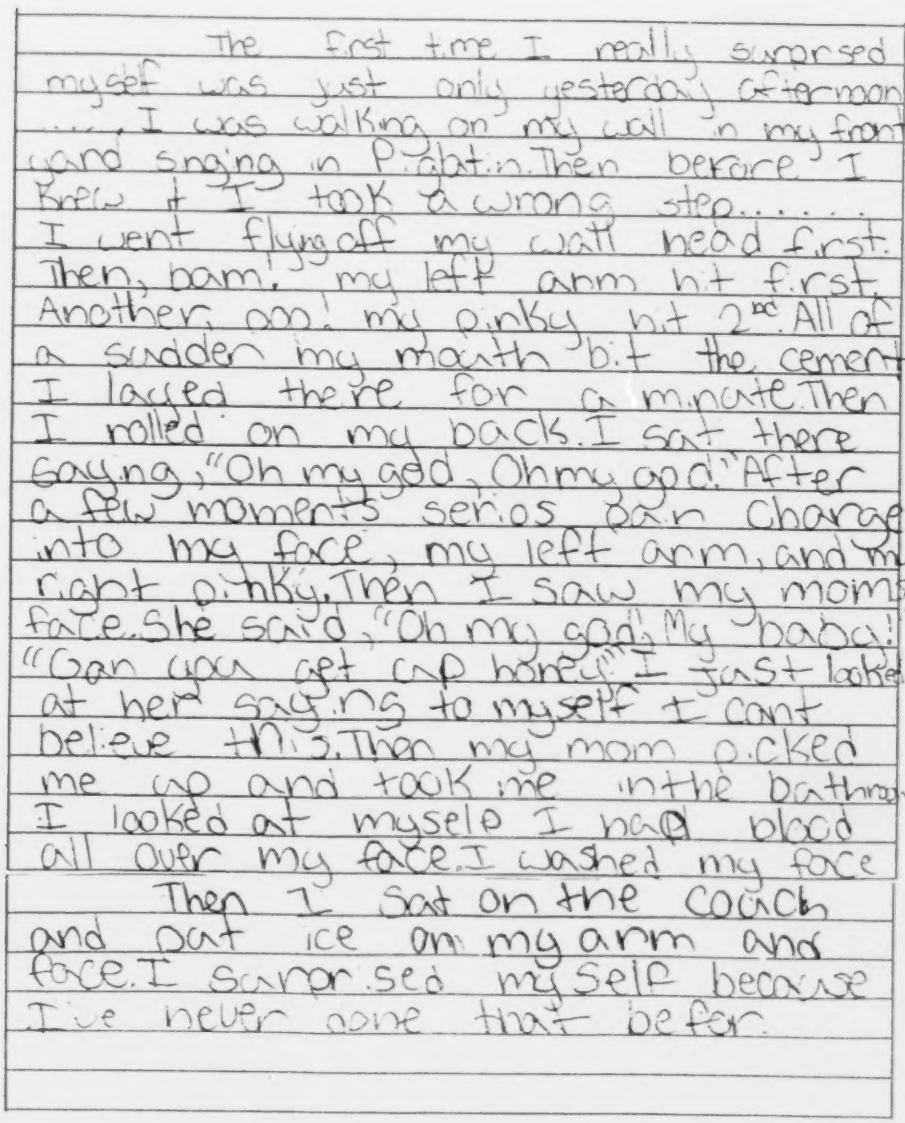
Writing Sample 4-V-5 Sample 22
This sample wrote to an alternate prompt, "Write about something surprising."



The first time I really surprised myself was just only yesterday afternoon ..... I was walking on my wall in my front yard singing in Pabat.in. Then before I knew it I took a wrong step..... I went flying off my wall head first. Then, bam, my left arm hit first. Another, ooo, my pinky hit 2nd. All of a sudden my mouth bit the cement. I layed there for a minute. Then I rolled on my backs. I sat there saying, "Oh my god, Oh my god." After a few moments seriosness charged into my face, my left arm, and my right pinky. Then I saw my moms face. She said, "Oh my god, My baby! "Can you get up honey." I just looked at her saying to myself I cant believe this. Then my mom picked me up and took me in the bathroom I looked at myself I had blood all over my face. I washed my face Then I sat on the couch and put ice on my arm and face. I surprised myself because I've never done that befor.

This paper was rated a *five* in voice. It employs humor at the outset and the writer definitely speaks to the audience in an individualistic and engaging way. The author uses conventions, i.e., ellipses, exclamation marks and dialogue to enhance the voice of this piece. The lively tone engages the reader form beginning to end and displays courage in attempting to use humor and dialogue. The projected tone and voice give flavor to the writer's message and seem very appropriate for the purpose and audience.

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Something Amazing

Bill Gates is someone amazing. He is amazing because he is the most richest man in the world. He is the richest man in the world because he invented the Microsoft comany. He is very famous and so is his company. Somebody who is rich doesn't have to be one of your heroes, but he just happens to be one of mine. Bill Gates has dreamed of something and acomplished it and he has also built himself this life. Keep on dreaming.

"Something Amazing" was scored a *four* in voice by the scorers. It starts off seeming sincere, but not genuinely engaged, committed or involved. However, by the middle of the piece, "Somebody who is rich doesn't have to be one of your heroes, but he just happens to be one of mine," he has convinced us of his personal engagement with the topic.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Once in Miami, Florda A dolphin named Flipper was sleeping in his pod. He was dreaming of being a Olympic gold metelist pole jumper. When he woke up he wanted to be like his dream. So the Little dolphin went to the gym. He tried the trampoline. Then he tried the monkey bars. Next he tried dumbbells. After working so hard he got hungry. He had penutbuter and jellyfish sandwich. He thought he was redy to jump the big pole. So he went to the stadium. He tried a bar from 3feet 7inches. With out looking he jumped the bar. He thougt he was good. But then a pro jumper a 50foot pole. Flipper was deturmand to beat him. So the Little dolphin trainded for years to win in a pole jumping contest. And wen that day came Flipper was ready. They got ready to jump and, Then flipper had won. Flipper the Wonder dolphin.

The story about a dolphin named Flipper was given a *four* by both readers. The tone and voice of this piece seems appropriate to a storytelling audience. The language is reminiscent of a picture book tale with which the author might be familiar. In places, there is some repetition. "He tried the trampoline. Then he tried the monkey bars. Next he tried dumbbells." It is followed by several other simple sentences, "He had...," He thought...," "So he went...," and "He tried..." These kept this paper from being a *five*, but the readers agreed that it was superior to a *three* because of some notable word choices i.e., "the little dolphin," "peanut butter and jellyfish sandwich," "determined to beat him," and "Flipper the wonder dolphin."

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

One day at dinyland

The ficst day I went to dinyland, My unkle, ant, mom, brothers, sisters, cuosens, and grandma went. I was so happy because all of those scasy rides and funny rides. I even saw two cherrectors that were miney, and mikey. They are two of my favorite cherrectors. Then first ride I got on was Spinning Cups. I even got very dizzy on that one. My unkle Sechio almost throse up. The best ride Splash mountain too. On that one my mom she was in the mittel so she got wet even I was in the mittel. Then we went to ice mountain. My grandma and me got on that we were on the very front. That was were a bear fell on me it was a fake one. It had red-eyes. Then there was a the bear it had blou eyes and it even had a chair on his left hand and on the other hand he had a person holding him from it's feet. Ater that we went to Dinner. Then my mom take me to a store and bought me a note book and a miney pen too.

The End

"One day at dinyland" was scored a *three* in voice by both readers. The writer seems sincere in this piece, however the result is short of compelling. Moments here and there amuse the reader, especially in the beginning of the piece. However, while the voice emerges on occasion, it retreats behind a listing of events in the middle and the end of the adventure.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

SPACE

SPACE IS ONTHER WORLD ABOVE EARTH, FILLED WITH STARS, COMETS, METEORS, ASTEROIDS, PLANETS, MOONS, BLACK HOLES, SOLAR SYSTEMS, and maybe ALIENS. SOME SCIENTISTST WANTED TO FIND OTHER PLANETS BESIDE EARTH ITSELF SO THEY INVENTED THE TELESCOPE TO LOOK. SPACE IS WAY WAY ABOVE EARTHS ATMOSPHERE. ABOVE THE CLOUDS. and UP ABOVE.

COMETS, METEORS, and ASTEROIDS HIT. EARTH BECAUSE THEY go SO FAST THAT THEY get INTO EARTHS ATMOSPHERE and will NOT STOP TILL IT HITS. SOME HAVE SEEN SPACE like ASTRONAUTS BUT THEY go BY SPACE SHUTTLE. BUT THEN IT HAS TO go AT LEAST 1025,00,529 MPH. TO GET OUT OF EARTHS ATMOSPHERE.

WE STILL DO NOT KNOW a huge AMOUNT ABOUT SPACE like IF WE CAN LIVE ON MARS and SO ON. SO WE CAN'T BE SURE ABOUT SPACE and THE AMAZING THINGS inside THIS UNKNOWN WORLD.

"Space" was scored a *three* in voice. Readers felt that it communicated in an earnest and pleasing manner with moments here and there amusing the audience. However, while the voice emerged on occasions, "Space is way way above earth's atmosphere, above the clouds and up above," it then retreated behind general, vague language, "Comet, meteors, and asteroids hit earth because they go so fast that they get into Earth's atmosphere and will not stop till it hits." The writer seems aware of an audience, but doesn't address the audience in as compelling a manner as a *four* or *five* paper might.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Today was Friday. The Boy scoutes were at the school. I was with them. It was 6:30 we went to the Hospital.
We were at the HOSPital we went to the relley Big room. Ther were a lote of People ther. And the PeoPle were relley nice to us.
It was relley nice to see all of them for once. It was cool too.
The Boy scoutes went home. We went to the school. We got all of the Flags. Then we went home we went to get movies. we went to Bed. and had a nice time.

This piece was scored a *two* in voice by both readers. They felt that the piece sometimes communicated in an earnest, pleasing manner, "It was cool too," but that it more often reverted to a kind of monotone, especially in the first and last paragraphs. Because this description could fit some bullets in both the *three* and the *one* rubric descriptors, they scored it a *two*.

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My brother's and I climb the tip top of Mountine rose

Sunday my brother's my dad and me went hiking on mountine rose on the way we saw a pond with tadpoles and baby frog's and we held them we kept some and then we started hiking on the way there was snow and we ate some because we had no food or water so we ate some and then we started to hike and there was lot's of river's and crikets and big rock's and hopers and then strang bug's that made the sound of rattle snak's they had lit'tle wing's and they flaped then it made the sound of a ratel snak we got to the very t'ip'l top of mount'in rose and there was a book that you sign's so we did and then we went back down to the car and we dove home.

This sample shifted from a *three* to a *one* range. At some points, it holds promise, when the author climbs the tip top of Mountain Rose; but then he reverts to a flat description of having no food or water, so they ate snow. The climax of reaching the top and signing the book, "... so we did and then we went back down to the car and we drove home" is aptly described in the *one* descriptor, "... communicates on a function level with no apparent attempt to move or involve the reader." Scorers gave this paper a *two* in voice.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

One day There was some bugs and I said waht are Those Things I said to my mom My mom said They are bugs. I went to my mom. My mom said we are going to Losvagise. I said ok. I said I like Losvagise. my mom said you like Losvagise my mom said I like Lobvagise Too. it is very hot in Losvagise. it is very big in Losvagise. we went home I said to my dad we had fun. My mom and dad said Time for bed I said Ok. in the morning. I said waht is That.; Thing my mom said it is a fly I said Ok. we are going to Losvagise Today agen I said. My mom said yes agen. I said do we have to go agen. my mom said yes we are going agen. I said I am mad it you.

Readers felt that the voice in this piece rated a *one*. This writing communicates on a functional level with no apparent attempt to move or involve the reader. The language is monotone and it tends to flatten all potential highs and lows of the message.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Why I think T.V changed the wolde is beeaues back in a log time ago they didn't have T.V's, and they had too find somthing too do. But not so log ago the frist T.V was made, and then stared, and that's way we have T.V now. Back after the frist T.V was made they didn't have that good of chanole's. Now days we have chanole's like H.B.O, movey chanole, and we even have V.C.R.'s too go with it, and that's why I think T.V changed the wolde.

The piece of writing about how TV changed the world was rated a *one* in voice by both scorers. The writer doesn't seem very involved with the topic, and is simply reporting the facts. He also doesn't seem to make use of voice to connect with the audience at any level. Readers had a hard time sensing the writer behind the words.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

A dark figure stood on the hilltop looking down at New York City debating on whether or not to go down and save the people from the Violator. With a machine gun Spawn III went down and looked for the monster, Violator, that the Darklands had sent up. Spawn saw a dirty alley and knew that the Violator was there waiting for him. When he got there he fell into a long, dark pit straight to the center of the earth which was were the Darklands were. Spawn shot a giant mutated snake's head and blasted a hole in the Violator. Spawn hadn't killed the leader, Malebolgia, but he knew he had to before it was to late.

This selection was scored a *five* in conventions by both readers. While it is not perfect, it would require only light editing to make it publishable. The use of capitalization and commas in correct places add to the readability of the text. Errors are so few and minor that a reader can easily skim right over them unless specifically searching for them.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Deer are absolutely wonderful animals. I like how they don't harm people when they're around them. I like deer because they're nice friendly animals. When I usally see them im coming home from places. Where I usally see them is on the side of the road eating grass. Something amazing about deer is that they can jump over a six foot fence. I also think their fur is soft. Sometimes my dad and I go hunting for deer with my Uncle Sterling in Ely.

The writing sample about deer was scored as a *five* by both readers. The writer demonstrates a good grasp of standard writing conventions. The spelling error on the word "usually" is really only one spelling error that occurs twice. He uses correct capitalization in proper nouns and complete sentences.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

One day I was eating school lunch and I picked up a hamburger. It looked, smelled and tasted grass! I asked my best friend "Ashley do you like the food here?" "NO!" she said So I stood up and walked into the office. The secretary said "Do you need anything?" I need to talk to the principal!" I said. When I walked into the room Mr. Worthen asked me "Do you need anything?" I told him "Yes as a matter of fact I do!!!" "Well then, please, tell me what's wrong." He said. "What is the school lunch made of?" I asked him. "Umm... I think the salad is made of chopped carrots, peices of lettuce, salad dressing and starch." he said. "Well that's what I need!" I said "What?" he asked. "I need better food!" I said. Finally, my friends walked into the office. "Hi kids!" Mr. Worthen said. They were there to complain about school lunches too. Finally Mr. Worthen sent us back into our classrooms. The next day we had lunch from the cafeteria and the food was great we could actualy eat it! My friends (Ashley, Jorge, Matt, Keeke and Toni) were all very happy and now people actualy look forward to going to lunch.

The piece about school lunch was scored a *four* by two readers. The writer takes some risks in attempting more sophisticated conventions with dialogue and this adds to the style of the piece. However, with corrections to punctuation and paragraphing, readers felt that somewhere between moderate to light editing would be in order.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Horse Show

In 1996 my mom, dad, my brother, and I went to a horse show. We lived in Oregon at that time. There were a lot of horses of all kinds. We wanted to go to a horse show that day because we had nothing to do. I got to pet one of the horses. The horse was a Lippizaner. A Lippizaner is a horse that is white. We had a lot of fun at the horse show.

The end.

"Horse Show" was scored a *four* in conventions by two readers. Although, the paragraphs run together, there are few problems in grammar usage and spelling. However, while there are few errors, the text is too simple to show control or skillful use of conventions to warrant a *five*.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

One day there was a little boy named Jorden. He was not normal. He had glasses and he was mentel. People loved Jorden and he loved people. He had one best freind and her name was Winne. They did averything togather. Jorden's mom gave him 50 dollers to go to the carneval. Jorden won a taz and a gold fish. They had 40 dollers left. They went home and gave the 40 doliers back to his mom. Winne had to go home. Jorden asked if he could walk Winne home. That night Winne found out that she was moving to main. The next day she told Jorden. The next day Winne was gone. Jorden was sad. He ran away from home. After 20 years he had came into a liftle town he looked a round and bumped in to a lady. Winne? Yes. The bolth know the have bren bestfriends. Then they where togither forever.

The story about Jorden was graded a three in conventions by the scorers. Paragraphing is not present and there are consistent spelling errors on high frequency words: friend, dollars, carnival, together, and forever. This paper would require moderate editing prior to publication.

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Writing Sample 4-C-3 Sample 36

The Amazing Unicorn

Once upon a time there was a magical unicorn. That lives forever. The unicorns name is Crystal. Crystal saved lots of peoples lives, She had saved 15 people so far. If it wasn't for her you mite not of been alive! Crystal is very specail because her horn is made out of silver and gold. She has a owner who is very mean to her. He wippes her. Crystals owner tryed to saw her horn of but it would not come off. Crystal was happy he couldn't get it off. One day Crystal discovered that she could fly. She practiced the hole day. Her horn started to glow for no reson. That night she exaped and flew as far away she could. When she was flying she saved someones life. Crystal was proud of herself. In the morning she landed on a island in the middle of no ware. She decided to live there. Crystal named the island Unicornpiaus, only unicorns can live there. She had a baby and named it Dimond. She saves peoples lives too. She stayed there forever, and still mite Live today. But the only thing is the island has not been discovered yet. So keep your eyes open when your flying in a airplane for a island with only unicorns..

The story, "The Amazing Unicorn" received a *three* in conventions from both readers. The writer shows reasonable control over a limited range of standard writing conventions and problems are not serious enough to distort meaning. However, in addition to the lack of paragraphing, there are some incomplete sentences and misspellings that would require moderate editing prior to publishing.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Matches

A month ago My twenty year old friend Put a Match in his mouth. In the front yard behind the car to show me and my sister. When he took it out it was off. I was so curise to know how he did it but by the time I was going to tell him i all ready kne how he did it. He put the match in his mouth and with his spit he turned it off. And he did not get in trouble. And me and my sister told him if he can do that one more time.

The story entitled "Matches" received a two from the readers who scored it. While the problems are usually not serious enough to distort meaning, the errors are very noticeable. Sentence fragments and grammatical errors occur often enough to occasionally affect meaning. Somewhat more than moderate editing will be required for this piece of writing prior to publishing.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The Amazing Thing That happen To me
Once Ther was a girl That had black hiar and
brown eyes and her name is Gladys Garcia. One
day Gladys went To schad at L.M.S. when she
got To The bus stop. The bus was a lemo. when They
got To To school. The graved her hand down The
stais When she got Ther. Recess and school lasted 4 hours.
When she got home. Saper was Ready and
Gladys got a Tow story cake and Five story
Cake. Gladys said "mom was happening Today?"
"Nothing why?" "I don't no" horyelp "Why"
"u hav to take you Toschool school was overe
and Tha Wext morning Ever Thing was
normal

The End
or is It?

This sample of writing received a *two* in conventions from both readers. Spelling errors are frequent, even on common words. She has partial knowledge of the correct use of quotation marks, but does not indicate understanding for any of the rules for paragraphing. There are times in the piece when the meaning is clear and others when the reader must read once to decode and then again for meaning.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Uwns ay Was rithine my
baicical in the maunthin With
my frainds james Nick Daniel
shane and Andrew. And my baisical braiks
dident work ay almost fell. At tha
moment ay traid to stoped with
my left fout. Bet et dident want
to stop. Ay traid may rith fauth.
Bet the saim ting hapend. Ay went
laik 10 milels whith no Braiks. Ay
almost fell again bet fainely
a got hom. My frend that wor
With me came 15 minets laither
then my uncle sad he had ficks-
the braiks. Bet he was laing. Bet
necks ay allmos kill a pillen then
ay a bull dog and ay chiguawa
chaising my accos my naberhod
then ay went to the park
and ay sai ay lot OF gioses they
wey flaying tho pop my
frid Nick then whi got hom
we aith diner plaid monopoli
two taims we plaid super
nintendo the we wact tv
for a lithe wayel ten.
plaid te gos fo en awor
then we yerd music and we wenttosleep

This piece requires extensive editing. The errors overwhelm the reader and it takes considerable decoding skill to understand the intended meaning. Spelling errors are frequent, even on common words. There is no paragraphing. Because of the thorough editing required, the readers rated this paper a *one* in conventions.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Brbriders are anasing
becus they put a lot
of sfrt in to brbruding
and is fun to urche
I am going to be a
Brbridiingride I am
rideing siers I jist graj
baatid from cafs siers are
to rideing becus cafs Raf
bracks brit cafs are fun
to Rde I like radyoking
is fun the frst rodeo
stort in tuwo minsis
the frst rodeo is stort
rodyoks are fun de rodeo
fn it gis hot at rosei
mope redeos are hot
buti mat de rodeo are
hot. The end

This paper was scored a *one* in conventions. Errors in spelling, punctuation, usage and grammar, capitalization and paragraphing repeatedly distract the reader and make the text very difficult to read.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Writing for Assessments

Writing for Assessments

Teacher tips for student preparation for writing assessments

- Provide practice sessions of writing
  - in different modes
  - to prompts for a variety of audiences and purposes
  - in timed situations
- Share scoring rubrics and examples of writing that meet the criteria
  - in single traits
  - using two or more traits
  - applying a holistic rubric
- Have students practice scoring and discussing examples
  - in large and small groups
  - as an individual/center activity
- Structure opportunities for students to self-evaluate writing using the rubrics in
  - personal reflection with portfolio assessment
  - teacher-student conferences
  - peer review situations
- Model writing techniques as a group, then allow sufficient practice time to
  - imitate and experiment
  - to reflect and revise
  - share with others
- Consider individual parts of the process, i.e. only introductions, conclusions, transitions, generating, organizing ideas or editing techniques, because not all writing
  - needs to go completely through the process
  - should eventually be published
  - must be shared with writing groups
- Create group and/or individual checklists for
  - revision practice
  - editing procedures (Revision and editing are different operations.)
- Write for and with your students on a regular basis to model the craft of writing
- Read aloud for and with your students on a regular basis to examine and discuss those writers whose craft you admire

Trait-by-trait Tips

Ideas and Development

Quality, not quantity is the hallmark of good idea development. It is using precise information with specific details at just the right moment that makes for an excellent piece of writing.

In whole group and small groups, help students to carefully understand and explain what the prompt might be asking for and what best strategies could be used in responding. Then, experiment with pre-writing tactics: clusters, lists, word associations, drawings or diagrams, monologue freewrites, etc., so that a variety of tools will be available to produce ideas.

Organization

This is often the trait that provides the most difficulty for students. Once ideas are generated and main points are determined, students need information on various organizational patterns, i.e., time or spatial orders or most/least important. They also need techniques for framing their ideas once the order is established: outlining, arrows, color-coding, post-it sorting, graphic organizers can be used to build the framework of the piece. Some students benefit with practice using concrete visual organizers for reasons/ideas including the "hamburger paragraph" and the five-part essay. Students need practice with a variety of introduction styles as well as formats for conclusions.

Voice

An understanding of appropriate diction and style for audience and purpose are a part of voice, as is the individualistic, expressive flair that demonstrates ownership of a piece of writing. Writers with voice show strong awareness of audience and can purposely use voice to influence the response of the audience. Direct students in using vivid word choices to show rather than tell readers about ideas.

Conventions

Coach students in how to silently "read aloud" their pieces to listen for errors or irregularities in their writing. Share proofreading strategies, i.e. reading for only one type of error such as punctuation at a time or reading from the end to the beginning, or isolating one section at a time for careful perusal. Students may make correction on the original drafts of their writing tests, provided they are done neatly and legibly. This is important during a timed writing assessment, as there is often not sufficient time to copy over when an additional error is discovered.

Lower scored papers tend to:
Provide generalities that sound like a list
Omit specific details
Ramble and get off track
Offer no recognizable organizational structure
Have difficulty with sentence formation and include fragments and run-ons
Include errors to spelling and grammar that distract the reader from the ideas

Higher scored papers tend to:
Have a clear focus and stay on topic
Include fresh original ideas and language
Organize and elaborate ideas in ways that engage and maintain interest
Use standard conventions correctly and creatively

Writing Process

Writing is a means of discovering, of reflecting on thought processes, and a means of sharing those thoughts with others. It involves problem solving, decision making, conceptualizing and critical thinking skills as well as information processing skills. Young writers use writing to develop social awareness by collecting and exchanging new insights and thereby enriching each others' concepts. They use writing as a powerful means to persuade, inform, explain, and influence, as well as a means of interacting with texts and with others' perspectives. Writing is an across-the-curriculum activity.

When teachers describe writing as a process, they are attempting to describe the complex system of transforming thought into written communication. Teachers of writing have revised their practice of simply assigning and evaluating a writing piece by proofreading and editing, to concern for each of the stages writers go through in producing the end product. Those stages: prewriting, composing, sharing/ responding, revising, editing, publishing, and evaluating, are all seen as tools in developing creative thinking and writing. However, these tools are not a rigid set of procedures to be followed in a linear manner. The process is individual and recursive in that the sequence in which the procedures and strategies are used varies with each writer and each new piece of writing. Some activities are necessarily repeated and overlap one another. For example, while the writer is still in the early prewriting or thinking stage, before ideas are even set down on paper, he/she may seek response to confirm and/or revise for the intended purpose and audience of a writing piece.

In order for writing to improve it is recognized that:

- Writers must read as well as write
- Writing is a skill that must be practiced
- Writing instruction must allow experimentation and adaptation
- Writers should practice flexibility by trying a variety of forms and contexts and for different audiences
- Writers should speak and listen to their own words
- Writers learn by reflecting on the processes they use
- Writers must assume editorial responsibility and take pride in what they write to be published

Prewrite

Prewriting activities are designed to help the flow of ideas before any formal writing begins. Since writing stems from a need or desire to communicate, it is the portion of the process that contains activities that encourage writers' abilities to generate ideas fluently, to help them discover what they want to say and how to communicate it. In includes any directed activity or exercise that motivates the writer to produce and express his/her ideas for the intended audience and purpose (describe, explain, persuade, share, etc.) It is a gathering of thoughts, often by first exploring what is already known, and discussing what is additionally needed on a self-chosen topic. It can be done as a member of a group or as an individual activity.

It can include all or any of the following methods:
Discussing
Brainstorming
Mapping
Clustering
Venn diagrams
Listing
Reading
Debating
Listening
Viewing
Sketching/drawing
Interviewing
Designing and evaluating questionnaires
Freewriting
Jotting down key words and phrases, dialogues, facts
Developing sensory details
Graphic organizers
Fantasizing or dramatizing
Answering who, what, where, when, why, how questions

As in all phases of the writing process, it is important to allow writers, after they have been introduced to a variety of techniques, their own choice of methods. Prewriting techniques can be revisited during periods of "writers block" during the drafting and revisions phases, and again during the evaluation phase of the writing process.

Draft

This step in the writing process allows the writer's formulated ideas to take shape by putting words to paper. Because the writer may still be unaware of what he/she wants to communicate, this is sometimes a process of discovery by which shape and form begin to emerge. At this stage, writers consciously construct sentences, paragraphs, and longer compositions, keeping in mind the topic, the purpose, the audience, the tone/voice, and the organization and structure to be used. These activities should not be impeded by grammatical editing concerns.

Writing in this phase usually consists of more than one draft of writing. Instruction might include methods designed to prioritize, classify, elaborate and/or connect ideas. The best teaching techniques encourage students to pull topics from their own minds to maintain responsibility and ownership of the expression of their own thoughts and ideas. Often, this is a place where writers discover what they really want to say in a piece of writing; ideas and whole drafts are sometimes abandoned and redrafted. It is a place to experiment with a variety of modes and techniques to express ideas, and it requires adequate time and ample encouragement.

While some writers like to plan an opening sentence or lead and begin there, some writers simply begin writing about their topic and worry about structure later. Some write telling sentences, then work on transforming them into showing pieces. Others write dialogue,

then transform that dialogue into prose or poetry. Like the writing process itself, drafting is not a linear activity and varies with each writer and each piece of writing.

Response

Response is a powerful stage of the writing process that allows an author to share a writing draft with an audience, often peers, who can provide positive feedback and reinforcement of good writing. It provides an opportunity for writers to examine if what they are saying is indeed what they want to say, and if their purpose to communicate a specific idea has been accomplished. It is a time for students to talk through their ideas and assess their own thinking, and it allows writers time to revise or possibly reassess their intention. It gives student writers a sense of power of their words to impact others while gaining a sense of what distinguishes effective from ineffective writing. Additionally, it encourages enthusiasm for ideas and the writing that expresses those ideas. Perhaps, most importantly, response brings a necessity for revision and editing skills, the next stages of the writing process.

Response activities can come from individual peers, conferencing with teachers, parents, or other adults or with peer feedback groups. Instructional lessons for peer feedback groups are teacher directed and might include:

- teacher modeling of appropriate and helpful response techniques which usually include at least one read aloud by the author
- the use of training papers fictitiously or anonymously authored for response modeling and practice
- role playing of successful and unsuccessful collaborative response groups and debriefing on the aspects of each
- check list models
- active listening instruction and practice in paraphrasing techniques
- author directed response whereby an author requests limited response about a specific aspect of the writing piece

In addition to response-for-revision, students need response opportunities to share their writing and thinking activities simply for the sake of sharing, with no attempt at gaining response. The emphasis in these cases is, of course, on communicating rather than receiving response for the sake of revision. It allows the establishment of a risk-free environment for later response sessions, where authors actively seek response to revise.

Revision

Revision is a time to re-view or revisit a piece of writing. It can and does happen at any time during the writing process. Some writers revise as they draft; others draft quickly, then revise. It can be in response to new ideas or different perspectives, or to the feedback given in the "response" portion of the process, but it is always an effort to strengthen the writing and to provide clarity of purpose and meaning. Revision is usually attempted through revision for ideas and revision for form. It is seldom neat and tidy for it is here where writers scratch out, mark over, add, delete, rephrase and reorder with

concern for consistency and structure. Writers may move back to see what they've said and move forward to elaborate. It is a time to check for supporting details, add descriptions or explanations. It may even be a time to start over again. The writer now reworks the piece for not only word choice, but how those words work together, and how fluently sentences work to make the writing vivid and clear. Organization, including beginning, ending, transitions, and internal structure is examined.

Teacher instruction might include:

- play and exploration with the written word and details
- experiments with various word choices and transitions
- sentence combining activities
- check list problem/solution charts
- use of flow charts or time lines or outlines
- methods of elaboration and achieving unity
- teacher modeling of revision devices (i.e. cross-outs, carets, arrows, asterisks coloring and other codes, cut and tape, etc.)

Edit

This portion of the writing process prepares a piece for publishing by dealing with correctness as identified by the generally accepted standards of written English. It includes editing for spelling, grammar, punctuation, capitalization, usage, sentence combining, sentence fragments, run-on sentences, paragraphing, or anything that would detract from the enjoyment and understanding of the piece of writing. Good proofreading often takes several perusals and can be accomplished through one or all of the following:

- personal editing using edit checklists, dictionaries, thesauruses, usage handbooks,
- word processing spell and grammar checks
- peer/group or family editing
- teacher conferencing

It is sometimes useful to proofread several times, each time for different kinds of mistakes. It is also beneficial to allow enough time to put the paper aside for a while before editing a second time.

Teacher instruction may include:

- read alouds for specific errors (i.e. punctuation, run-on sentences, missing words, etc.)
- mini lessons on editing rules
- teacher directed conference where individual editing skill is taught
- introduction and practice with proofreading symbols
- techniques for ease in finding errors (i.e. reading aloud, starting with the last word and reading backwards one word at a time, circling questionable spellings, etc.)
- practice in desktop publishing techniques

Publish

This portion can take many forms, but they each celebrate the finished piece of writing by sharing it with an audience or a variety of audiences. As the writing is shared it reinforces the initial writing purpose and validates the entire writing process.

Writing pieces can be read aloud, posted in the classroom, put into a class book, framed in a poster, sent home to friends and family, published in a class/school publications, performed for a variety of audiences, entered in an anthology, audio or videotaped, submitted to general publications or contests, or any of a number of additional forms of publishing that recognize the accomplishment attained by the writer.

Evaluation

Self-evaluation can happen at the end of the piece, or any time during the writing process. It is an assessment or judgment where decisions are made about what worked well and has met the writer's expectations and intentions. When written up it can be attached to the piece being evaluated and can become part of a portfolio assessment.
Teacher evaluation is where the writer receives teacher feedback. This can come in many forms: a grade, a mini lesson, a portfolio assessment, an oral conference and is best accomplished when the writer is a part of the evaluation process, and is aware of the criteria by which the evaluation is being made.
Trait scoring, based on a set group of writing traits: ideas, organization, voice, and conventions, is used in Nevada state writing assessments. Students can develop individual rubrics based on their expectations of good writing early on in the writing process, and use it as a guide during prewriting, drafting, response, and revision.
An important part of the evaluation process, in addition to reflecting on current writing efforts, is a discussion of future writing goals based on the current evaluation. It makes evaluation an occasion for students and teacher to analyze and write together and provides a chance to extend writers' involvement and development.

Writing is a meaning-seeking process, an invitation to active involvement as thinkers and as learners. Even when writing is not taken through the entire writing process, it is still a valuable tool in encouraging students to explore, categorize, compare/contrast, invent, interpret, and evaluate ideas. It assists in problem solving and decision making, is a format for examining reasoning and critical thinking skills, allows the expression of thoughts in creative ways, and perhaps most importantly for educators, provides for the transference of thinking skills from one subject to another.

Trait Bookmarks for Classroom Use

Trait Card Bookmarks

Reproduce the bookmarks on the following pages, one per student, and mount each on a different colored piece of construction paper leaving a one to two inch border all around the sides. Have the entire class use the same color for each trait, i.e., blue *ideas*, yellow *organization*, pink *voice*, green *conventions*, purple *word choice* and red *sentence fluency*. Have each student indicate his/her initials on the back of each bookmark. Laminate for durability.

Teaching/learning practice with bookmarks:

- Color-coded traits: Have the class write and then vote on best trait color to use for each bookmark. For older students, tie into metaphor discussion.
- Trait card collections: As each trait is introduced, have students make and/or collect cards to use as bookmarks to indicate a section of a shared text or entire book that illustrates best/worst examples of that trait. Follow up with class discussion of the reading.
- Traits up: For read-aloud participation, begin to read a book/story aloud. Pause and have students hold up the trait they think is best depicted. (With same color trait cards, teacher can easily see who is picking which trait.) Have students explain their choices.
- Jigsaw: Divide students into equal groups by whichever traits they will be examining. Have that group become that trait's expert and have them discuss the merits of that trait in an indicated piece of writing. Reconfigure the groups so that each new group has one expert for each trait in the group and have them explain their trait group's findings to their new group.
- Response: Have students paper-clip a single trait bookmark to a piece of their own writing for peer/teacher response, indicating specific trait for response request.

Ideas and Content

SHOWING, NOT TELLING

DETAILS, DETAILS, DETAILS **Interesting to the reader**

SSSTF WORDS **Dialogue**

Unusual/small details others might not notice

Organization

Good beginning. Gets your attention.

Beginning, middle, end (Plot)

Sequence makes sense

Easy to follow

Voice

Reader know you were really "into it"
Laughter, tears, feelings
Individuality (your own style)
Passion

Word Choice

SSSTTF Words
Fun with language
Strong action verbs
Just the right word
Word pictures

Sentence Fluency

SMMMOOOOOOOOTH FLOWING
Rhythm to the piece
Language with a beat
Variety of lengths and structure and beginnings

Conventions

Good sentences: smooth flowing
Punctuation correct: periods, commas, quotation marks
Capitalization
Makes reading simple
Clean copy, publishable, polished work

Thank you to Chris Hansen, Fallon, Nevada teacher for the following SSSTTF Word List and for the wording on the bookmarks

Name _____

SSSTTF WORD LIST

(Sight, Sound, Smell, Touch, Taste / Feelings)

SIGHT WORDS

FAST: scamper, skip, scramble, dart, spring, sprint, stride, streak, dash, race, zoom, zip, plummet, swoop, plunge, fly, sail, flick, whisk, swerve, bolt, gallop, trot.

SLOW: creep, crawl, plod, amble, saunter, slink, stalk, sneak, stagger, lope, canter, waddle, soar, drift, droop

SHAPES: flat, round, wavy, globular, ruffled, frilled, crinkled, chubby, rotund, portly, swollen, lumpy, angular, spindly, thin, wiry, twiggy.

LOOKS: freckled, spotted, blotched, wrinkled, striped, bright, shiny, glowing, glossy, shimmering, sparkling, iridescent, glassy, flashy, sheer, transparent, translucent, opaque, muddy, grimy, drab, dingy, dull, dark, dismal, rotted, old, worn, untidy, shabby, messy, cheap, ugly, ramshackle, tired, exhausted, awkward, crooked, flat, stout, wide, flat, narrow, overloaded, congested, cluttered, crowded, jammed, packed, bruised, stretched, tall, erect, lean, slender, supple, lively, muscular, sturdy, robust, strong, healthy, frail, pale, fragile, pale, sickly, small, tiny, miniature, timid, shy, nervous, frightened, wild, bold, tantalizing, irresistible, energetic, perky, arrogant, regal, stately, elegant, large, huge, immense, massive, gigantic, dazzling, lavish, exotic, radiant, fiery, blazing, fresh, clean, scrubbed, tidy, handsome, pleasant, calm.

RED: pink, salmon, rose, coral, raspberry, strawberry, cherry, crimson, cardinal, ruby, maroon, burgundy

BLUE: sky, sapphire, azure, turquoise, aquamarine, violet, peacock, royal, navy, porcelain, cobalt.

YELLOW: beige, buff, peach, butter, lemon, canary, gold, topaz, sulfur, mustard, butterscotch, orange, tangerine, persimmon

BROWN: sandy, almond, amber, tawny, hazel, cinnamon, nutmeg, chocolate, coffee, copper, rust, ginger, bronze, walnut, mahogany

GREEN: celery, mint, apple, lime, kelly, emerald, olive, chartreuse

WHITE: snow, milky, marble, cream, ivory

GRAY: ashen, dove, steel, oyster, silver, platinum

PURPLE: lavender, lilac, orchid mauve, plum, mulberry, magenta

BLACK: jet, ebony, licorice

LOUD SOUNDS: crash, thud, bump, thump, boom, thunder, bang, smash, explode, roar, scream, screech, shout, yell, whistle, whine, squawk, bark, bawl, bray, rage, blare, rumble, grate, slam, clap, stomp, jangle, rasp, clamor, tumult, riot, racket, brawl, bedlam, pandemonium, hubbub, raucous, earsplitting, piercing, rowdy

SOFT SOUNDS: sigh, murmur, whisper, whir, rustle, twitter, patter, hum, mutter, snap, hiss, crackle, bleat, peep, buzz, zing, gurgle, swish, rush, chime, tinkle, clink, hush, speechless, mute, faint, melody, musical

SPEECH SOUNDS: stutter, stammer, giggle, guffaw, laugh, sing, yell, scream, screech, snort, bellow, growl, chatter, murmur, whisper, whimper, talk, speak, drawl

TOUCH WORDS: cool, cold, icy, lukewarm, tepid, hot, steamy, sticky, damp, wet, slippery, spongy, mushy, oily, waxy, fleshy, rubbery, tough, crisp, elastic, leathery, silky, satiny, velvety, smooth, soft, wooly, furry, feathery, fuzzy, hairy, prickly, gritty, sandy, rough, sharp, thick, pulpy, dry, dull, thin, fragile, tender.

TASTE WORDS: oily, buttery, salty, bitter, bittersweet, sweet, hearty, mellow, sugary, crisp, ripe, bland, tasteless, sour, vinegary, fruity, tangy, raw, medicinal, fishy, peppery, hot, burnt, spoiled, rotten

SMELL WORDS: sweet, scented, fragrant, aromatic, perfumed, fresh, balmy, earthy, piney, pungent, tempting, spicy, savory, sharp, gamy, fishy, briny, acidy, burnt, reeking, putrid, rotten, sour, rancid, sickly, stagnant, moldy, musty, mildewed, damp, dank, stench

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In some kinds of writing, it's important to let the reader know how the writer feels inside.

FEELING WORDS: love, warmth, zeal, thrill, elation, joy, satisfaction/satisfied, happiness / happy, sympathy/sympathetic, etc., tenderness, concern, grief, remorse, sorrow, sadness, melancholy, despair, depression/depressed, worry, dread, fear, hate, resentment, jealousy, greed/greedy, anger, rage, shame, pride/proud, hysterical, enthusiastic, impulsive, nervous, temperamental, sensitive, sentimental, affectionate, loving

Add words you find that you'd like to use in your stories.

Resources and References

Resources for Writing Teachers

National Professional Organizations

National Council of Teachers of English
1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL 61801
Publications including books and periodicals. Collegial group meetings.
http://www.ncte.org/teach/

National Writing Project
5511 Tolman Hall, #1670
University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720
Three Nevada sites.
http://www-gse.berkeley.edu/Research/NWP/nwp.html

Southern Nevada Writing Project
Rosemary Holmes-Gull, Director
Dr. Marilyn McKinney Co-Director
Department of C & I Box 455016
4505 Maryland Parkway
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
Las Vegas, Nevada 89154-5016
phone (702) 895-3247 fax (702) 895-4898
http://www.unlv.edu/programs/snwp/

Great Basin Writing Project
Nancy Remington, Director
Robert McGinty, Vicki Rossolo, Co-Directors
Great Basin College
1500 College Parkway
Elko, NV 89801
phone (775) 753-2226 fax (775) 738-8771

Northern Nevada Writing Project
Kay Henjum, Director
Dr. Kathy Boardman, Launie Gardner, Co-Directors
College of Education, MS 288
University of Nevada, Reno
Reno, NV 89557
phone (775) 784-4951 fax (775) 784-4758
http://www.unr.edu/unr/colleges/educ/nnwp/

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
Assessment and Evaluation Program with 6-trait writing model.
Website has pre-scored student samples, writing lessons and products
http://www.nwrel.org/eval/writing/

References for Writing Assessments

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Myers, Miles, Spalding, Elizaberh (Eds.) Assessing Student Performance : Grades K-5 (Standards Exemplar Series) Urbana, IL: NCTE, 1997.

Perrone, V. (Ed.). (1991). Expanding Student Assessment. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Spandel, V & Stiggins, R.J. (1997). Creating Writers: Linking Writing Assessment and Instruction. New York, NY: Longman.

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White, E. M. Assigning, Responding, Evaluating: A Writing Teacher‹s Guide. 3rd Edition. New York: St. Martin‹s, 1995.

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Notes